This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

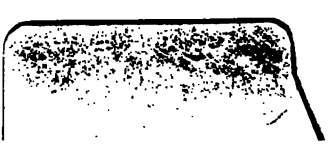
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HARVARD
DIVINITY
SCHOOL
Andover-Harvard
Theological Library



AN

ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE

OF

JAMES BEATTIE, LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC, ABERDEEN.

IN WHICH ARE OCCASIONALLY GIVEN

CHARACTERS OF THE PRINCIPAL LITERARY MEN,

AND A SKETCH OF

THE STATE OF LITERATURE IN SCOTLAND DURING THE LAST CENTURY.

Some Poems, not generally known to be Dr. Beattie's, are also introduced in the course of the Narrative.

BY ALEXANDER BOWER.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. AND R. BALDWIN, NEW BRIDGE-STREET.

1804.

DIVINITY SCHOOL LIBRARY. HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Bower

TO

ROSS THOMPSON, ESQ.

OF LAURENCETOWN, COUNTY OF DOWN,

IRELAND:

THIS LIFE OF DR. BEATTIE,

IN TESTIMONY OF REAL ESTEEM AND SINCERE

GRATITUDE,

is respectfully inscribed,

By his most obliged

humble Servant,

ALEX. BOWER.

Aberdeen,
24th January 1804.

CONTENTS.

SECTION I.

Birth of Dr. Beattie, and the History of his Education till the Commencement of his academical Studies . . . . . PAGE 1

SECTION II.

His academical Course, with Remarks on the Plan of Education in the Scottish Universities, particularly in that of Aberdeen, and on the Characters of the Professors, in that University, concerned in the Education of Dr. Beattie 15

SECTION III.

The same Subject continued 44

SECTION IV.

History of Beattie while Master of the Parish School of Fordoun ... PAGE 69

SECTION V.

The Circumstances attending his Removal to the Grammar-School of Aberdeen, 102

SECTION VI.

His History while a Teacher in the Grammar School at Aberdeen, with an Account of the first Edition of his Poems .. 115

SECTION VII.

From his Appointment to be Professor of Moral Philosophy, Logic, and Rhetoric, in the University of Aberdeen, till the Period of the Publication of the Essay on Truth 143

From the Publication of this Essay till his Death 172

THE

LIFE

OF

DR. BEATTIE, &c.

SECTION I.

Birth of Dr. Beattie, and the History of his Education till the Commencement of his Academical Studies.

JAMES Beattie, LL.D. was born on the 5th of November, in the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty-five. The parish of Laurencekirk, in the county of Kincardine, in Scotland, has the honour of enrolling his name among those of several other literary characters, which that remote part of the island has produced.

His ancestors had resided there for a considerable period. The Beatties or Beatons, however, came originally from the western isles; upon what occasion, or at what precise time, cannot be exactly ascertained. His father, James Beattie, followed the honourable profession of a farmer. His mother's name was Jean Watson.

Dr. Beattie's father was a man of very considerable abilities—of the strictest probity—exact in taking an account of the manner wherein he spent his time; and at his leisure hours he cultivated the Muses. A journal kept by him, as well as some specimens of his poetry, are still in the possession of his descendants. This last circumstance is the more worthy of being noticed, as it proves that Dr. Beattie derived his poetical turn from his father.

The subject of this memoir was deprived of his father at a very tender age; he was then only seven years old. An event of this kind is always accompanied

with serious consequences, in whatever situation the sufferer may be placed; such misfortunes, however, are felt more severely by some ranks in society than by others. Those who are in circumstances, not sufficiently destitute to excite the commiseration of the public, are generally left to their own unassisted exertions; and in this situation was the family of Mrs. Beattie. The hopes of the widow, and her helpless offspring, were immediately fixed upon the senior, and only brother of the Doctor. In him they were not disappointed. David Beattie, at the time of his father's death, was eighteen years old; and as it was not then the custom, in Scotland, to initiate boys so early into the knowledge of the learned languages, as has of late become fashionable, he was at that age at school prosecuting his studies. His father, in consequence of the promising talents which he discovered, had resolved to send him to the University; but a premature death de-

prived him of this advantage, and imperiously called upon him to relinquish such pursuits, and to devote his time and abilities to the support of his mother's family. This duty, for a long series of years, he discharged with assiduity and affection; and whatever pleasure, or instruction, the public have derived from Dr. Beattie's writings, they ought to consider themselves as highly indebted for it to the fostering, generous, and, I may say, parental care of his elder brother.

Of a character so interesting one would wish to be acquainted with particulars, which the hand of time has now consigned to oblivion. It may not be improper, however, to add that after living to a good old age (nearly fourscore years) his good sense, his general knowledge, and the superiority of his powers, were universally acknowledged, because felt by those who had the honour of his acquaintance.

In his early years Dr. Beattie was of a

very weakly constitution. It is, however, of little consequence to inquire in what particular year he went to school; it is likely he would afford as early indications of a capacity to acquire the elements of knowledge, as the generality of boys exhibit; and this, it will be admitted, is the ordinary and common maxim, whereby a judicious parent is actuated, when it is resolved on to send a child to school.

Laurencekirk has had the singular fortune of enjoying the benefit of the labours of two individuals, who have contributed very considerably to the reputation of the literature of Scotland. I refer to Thomas Ruddiman and to James Milne. The former was undoubtedly a wonderful proficient in the knowledge of the Latin language; and one of the most profound and judicious grammarians, who have attempted the illustration of that ancient and venerable language. And, whatever success he had as a teacher, he has contributed very largely to the ease

and usefulness of the most eminent teachers, and students of Latin, of which the last century can boast.

Though James Milne was not eminent as an author, yet his fame as a teacher was not inferior to any of his contemporaries. He was a zealous disciplinarian; an enthusiast in his profession; and, what is not always an attendant on the requisite knowledge, he possessed in a high degree the art of communicating useful knowledge to the youth committed to his care.

In Scotland there are schools exclusively appropriated to the instruction of the youth in the knowledge of the language of Rome. The origin of this institution for the education of Scotsmen, is the same with that of similar institutions in other parts of Europe. During the period, which preceded the Reformation, the knowledge of the Latin tongue was indispensably necessary to all ranks. It was the language wherein the *offices* of

religion were publicly performed. It was the language employed by learned men when they conversed and corresponded. The professors in the different seminaries of learning delivered their lectures in the same tongue; and as might be naturally expected, almost all the books of philosophy and literature, in general, were composed in that language. This was not only the case in the middle and dark ages, but vestiges of the same custom, with the exception of the service of religion, existed for a very long period after the revival of learning.

Those schools, however numerous or respectable, have hitherto been confined to the most populous of the towns of Scotland. In a country village such an institution could scarcely be expected. At Laurencekirk (then only what in Scotland is called a kirktown, or village in the neighbourhood of the parish church,) in consequence of the low state of agriculture, manufactures, and trade, sufficient

encouragement could never have been given to such a foundation.

James Milne therefore was under the necessity of condescending to instruct his scholars in the knowledge of the very first elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic; at the same time that he was called upon to perform what could not fail to be to him a more agreeable task, to teach the language and illustrate the beauties of thought and expression of the Roman and Greek writers. At this distant period some of his peculiarities are still remembered. The oddities of ordinary men excite no interest, and a detail of those belonging to the obscure schoolmaster of Laurencekirk could not be expected to afford much pleasure. Yet the man who chiefly contributed to form the mind of Dr. Beattie; and who contributed so much to the developement of his talents, as laying deep the foundations of classical knowledge implies, is a character to whom posterity ought not to be indifferent. And

the force of mind which he appears to have possessed, even independent of his great learning, would have rendered him respectable in a more elevated situation. To his school young Beattie was sent, and it is well known to his friends that he always spoke of Milne with the gratitude and respect, nay with the enthusiasm of one who had profited much by his instructions.

Milne was fully aware of the absolute necessity of possessing a thorough acquaintance with the elements of grammar. To such a scholar as Beattie this could hardly fail to prove highly advantageous; and his accurate and correct knowledge of the idiom of the Latin tongue may surely, in a great measure, be ascribed to this as to its cause.

The difference of opinion cannot be very great, in regard to the particular classical authors considered to be best calculated to accelerate the progress of the young scholar. The preference it is

universally agreed must be given to the writers of the Augustan age; yet some are better adapted for certain stages in a course of study than others. Simplicity and perspicuity of expression do not constitute all that is required to determine our choice. The subject treated of ought certainly to be taken into the account. A simple narrative of ordinary events will be more easily comprehended, and consequently relished by a very young boy, than a passage selected from a philosophical discourse, or even than a passage from any of the poets. In a short time however any one of moderate abilities may read the poets with considerable advantage. None of the Roman poets can, I think, be preferred to Ovid, when viewed with a reference to this purpose. The perspicuity of his writings is not surpassed if equalled by Virgil and Horace themselves; and many parts of his works, the Metamorphosis particularly, take a strong hold of the imaginations of young per-

sons. Whether these or other reasons induced Milne to shew great partiality to Ovid, cannot now be known; yet it is an undoubted fact, that his scholars read a much greater proportion of Ovid than of any other classic. The favourite author of Ruddiman, Milne's predecessor, was Ovid, as he was of Milton. There are, comparatively speaking, very few words, and still fewer idioms in the classics, that are not to be found in Ovid. I have been thus minute in my observations, because I do not entertain the least doubt that the powers of Beattie's imagination were much improved by his familiar acquaintance with Ovid at that very early period. And that this, among other causes, contributed essentially to Dr. Beattie's eminence as an English poet.

In different parts of his essays he may appear to some to speak rather disrespectfully of Ovid. Such expressions, however, are generally introduced when comparing him with Virgil, or some of the

other poets, who have been universally admitted to have possessed a more correct taste, and perhaps greater powers of understanding. It deserves also to be remarked, that in the account which the Doctor has given of his son James Hay Beattie, we are expressly informed that a considerable portion of his time was spent in reading Ovid. This shews the opinion really entertained by him in regard to the propriety of putting Ovid in the hands of boys.

A narrative of the most minute circumstances in the history of the progress of a man of letters, will be considered by every judicious person as a most invaluable treasure. We are informed in the Essay on Poetry, p. 474, that the first opportunity he ever had of being acquainted with Virgil, was through the medium of Ogilvie's translation. It is probable that he had at this time made some progress in the knowledge of classical literature; but this allusion, trifling as it may appear to some,

discovers the early bent of his mind, and the pleasure he derived from poetry.

The practice of writing Latin verses has never been generally introduced into the public schools of Scotland—Beattie had seldom or never surely attempted this in the early part of his life, because he was wont to confess at a time, when he had already acquired the most distinguished reputation as an author of real poetical genius, that he experienced great difficulty when he tried it. I suppose he never wrote six lines of latin verse.

Industry at school at a very early time of life, is not a certain proof of future proficiency, a good deal depends upon the master, and much more upon the scholar. Some there are who have afforded little or no proofs while at school of the real talents they possessed; and others have appeared to give very early indications of genius, which could not be traced by the most scrupulous observer in any act of their lives posterior to the time that they were at school.

At a very early period of life Beattie was distinguised by his fellow-scholars not only by the superiority of his powers, but by his indefatigable application. He was always in the highest station in his class. Diligent, attentive, and regular in accomplishing the tasks prescribed to him, his reputation within the small circle of his friends began to extend.

The particular circumstances attending the progress of his fame among his school-fellows, I cannot now ascertain. It is an unquestionable truth, that he was called *Poet Beattie* at school. Owing to the delicate state of his health, his elder sister, Elizabeth, always accompanied him to school. This young lady died at an early age. Her attachment, however, to her brother was so great, that she not only gave attendance at the public school, but assisted him in private, and made such proficiency that she could read Virgil with facility.

SECTION II.

His academical Course, with Remarks on the Plan of Education in the Scottish Universities, particularly in that of Aberdeen, and on the Characters of the Professors, in that University, concerned in the Education of Dr. Beattie.

THE time now approached when Beattie was to enter upon his academical course. In Scotland access is more easily obtained to the higher establishments for learning than in England. That is, persons of moderate circumstances, if they are disposed, have it in their power to give the youth the best opportunity of improvement which the country can afford. The acuteness of David Beattie had for a considerable time discerned the very superior talents of his brother. Generously disposed to afford him every opportunity to exert those abilities which he had display-

ed at school, it was resolved that Beattie should be sent to the university. The languor which generally accompanies the decisions of ordinary men was not to be discovered in the conduct of his brother; and he determined to call forth all his energies to support James at college, and to cherish the improvement of those talents with which the villagers of Laurencekirk were so much impressed.

In the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-nine, the two brothers left Laurencekirk, and directed their course to Aberdeen. For what reason I know not, they remained at Stonehaven the first night, having accomplished only half of the way, though the whole was but an easy day's journey. They stopped in the house of Peter Logie, a man, though loquacious, yet possessed of a considerable portion of general knowledge. On this man young Beattie composed a song, some stanzas of which I remember to have heard recited; but I could not venture at this

distance of time to commit them to writing.

The peculiar mode of their conveyance to Aberdeen is a matter of very trifling moment. It may not be unacceptable to some, however, to be informed, that they rode on one horse; and, at a season of the year not the most agreeable for undertaking a journey (when good roads were unknown in Scotland), of thirty English miles.

Beattie's, or rather his brother's circumstances not being very affluent, it was determined that he should be a candidate for what, in the academical language of Scotland, is called a burse, or bursary. The defininition of the word bursar by Johnson may have misled many Englishmen. He seems to have supposed that it was solely the prerogative of the presbytery to give a title to these exhibitions or petty pensions. This, however, is a great mistake. I may affirm with certainty, that no presbytery, of the seventy-eight

in Scotland, possesses any similar prerogative. Though Edinburgh be the capital, yet the University there was founded later than that of any of the other four. Perhaps this circumstance may in some measure account for the fact, that there are annual competitions in St. Andrews, Aberdeen, and Glasgow universities, to which nothing similar is to be found in Edinburgh. The few burses there are either in the gift of the magistrates of Edinburgh, or of some affluent families in the neighbourhood.

The reputation of Marischal College had induced Beattie to appear as a candidate there. The form upon such occasions is, that a piece of English is dictated to the candidates by a professor, which they are required to translate into Latin. They are inclosed in the college-hall, with one of the town clerks and the professor who prescribes the trial, and are at liberty to retire whenever they have written their version. The name of the writer is sub-

scribed at such a convenient distance that it can be easily cut off. It is then numbered; and the same number is written upon the slip of paper, on which the name is. The judges are therefore prevented from being partial, even though they were so disposed. After the different merits of the competitors have been ascertained, and the most valuable burse adjudged to the writer of the best translation, they arrange such as remain according to their comparative excellence. When this part of the business is finished, the names of the successful candidates are easily obtained, by comparing the number on the version with the number on the slip of paper containing the writer's name.

On the day of the competition, David Beattie waited with great anxiety for the issue of the trial. He was surprized at the short time James had taken to finish his version, and even expressed to him his fears that he had been in too great a hurry, and had not bestowed sufficient pains

upon it. Next day, however, when the roll was called, James Beattie's name was first on the list, and he was consequently entitled to the best burse.

The small sums of money thus bestowed upon young men are quite inadequate to support them while at college, without some other pecuniary aid; the value of money having fallen so much, since the funds were originally established from which the greater number of burses are paid. The average value in Aberdeen may be considered as too high when it is stated at five pounds sterling per annum. There are several however much above that sum.

Marischal College, at Aberdeen, was founded by Keith, Earl Marishal of Scotland, about the end of the sixteenth century; an honourable testimony of his munificence, and of his zeal for the interests of literature.

The course of education in all the universities of Scotland is pretty similar; and

at the period of their foundation they were principally intended for the education of churchmen. An observation which equally applies to the greater number of the European seminaries of learning.

The reputation of every school of learning and philosophy does not depend upon the great sums of money appropriated to its teachers and professors. Nay, I think it may be proved, that the public teachers of the best endowed Universities run the greatest risk of sinking into sloth and indolence. The ability wherewith the duties of the several professors are discharged is the principal recommendation to those who have the interest of the youth at heart; and this cannot be long concealed, even from those who can form no just estimate of the merits of any literary character.

Beattie was exceedingly fortunate in having an opportunity presented to him of profiting by the instructions of Principal Thomas Blackwell, professor of Greek,

author of the Life of Homer, and of the Court of Augustus. The Greek class is the first in order in the regular course of Marischal College: because it must be observed, that in this university there is no professorship of what in Scotland and on the Continent is called *Humanity*, that is, a class appropriated to the study of the Latin language. This, however, is amply compensated by the assiduous attention paid to the cultivation of the knowledge of this noble language, by the professors of two other departments, whose business it is to cause a portion of some Roman classic to be read once a day at the public meetings of their several classes.

Blackwell's father had been Principal of Marischal College. He himself succeeded Princpal John Osborne, in the same office, who died upon the 19th of August, 1748. Dr. Blackwell, however, was not admitted to the exercise of his new office till the 9th of November following. He seems to have paid very great attention to

the discipline of the college. He renewed a practice (which it is likely had once been common) for every professor in the University to deliver a discourse in the public school upon some subject connected with his profession. Blackwell delivered his first oration upon the 7th of February, 1749.

Through the poverty of the generality of the students their attendance at college was very partial; to correct this was one of the first objects of his attention. Accordingly upon the 16th of October, 1749, previous to the commencement of the session, an advertisement in the public papers informed the students, that a more regular attendance was to be required; and to shew that the principal and professors were perfectly in earnest when they gave this public notice, three of the bursars, who had not complied with the terms of the advertisement, were expelled upon the 10th of November following. Even when Principal, the dili-

gence of Blackwell was not relaxed; for about February 1750, he, as formerly, opened a class for the instruction of the students in ancient history, geography, and chronology.

* Blackwell was a very extraordinary man. He was enthusiastically fond of the Greek language, as every one who has made any proficiency in the knowledge of it must be. The whole bent of his studies was exclusively devoted to the cultivation of polite literature. He was a warm admirer of the philosophy and writings of Lord Shaftesbury, which may no doubt be partly accounted for by the ardour with which they both read, and almost adored the literature and philosophy of Greece. Perhaps an accidental occurrence, as well as a similarity of pursuits, contributed to raise the great admiration of the Principal. One thing however is certain, that even his style is formed upon the model of Shaftesbury.

* See No. 1 of the Appendix.

It was Blackwell who revived the study of Greek literature in the north of Scotland; and he had the merit of rearing some of the best Greek scholars, whose names the history of the literature of Scotland for the last century can record. Dr. Beattie, near the end of his Essay on the Utility of Classical Learning, has borne testimony to the merit of his old master. He styles him a very learned author.

Blackwell, like every man of acknowledged talents, formed a very general subject of conversation; and among his scholars to *this day* his memory is still cherished. Beattie was all his life time a most accurate observer of men and manners. When he unbended among his acquaintance he was wont to describe, in striking colours, the formality and even pomp of this singular man. Blackwell was not distant nor reserved; but the loose kind of morning undress to which Beattie had never seen any thing similar,

and in particular the shape of the shoes which were made after the fashion of the reign of Queen Anne, as well as the portly mien and dignified manner wherein Blackwell stepped through the public school, appeared to have impressed Beattie much. These little anecdotes would be of no value did they refer to ordinary men. There are some however who would wish to see them recorded.

As no evidence exists by which it can be proved how early in the session Blackwell discerned Beattie's genius, it is in vain to enter into a particular inquiry what the real state of the case might have been. It is an undoubted fact that Blackwell not only discovered the abilities of his pupil, but also patronized him.

Blackwell's enthusiasm for Homer was great. He wrote a life of Homer; and the practice of his class was to read most particularly as much of that poet as the shortness of the session would allow. And it is known that he generally succeeded in

giving his pupils a relish for Homer. Perspicuity and simplicity of expression, with all the fervour of genius, are the distinguishing characteristic of Homeric poetry. How far young Beattie entered into the nature and spirit of the works of the first of the poets it would be presumption to affirm. His poetical turn however even at that period, and his uncommon zeal for improving himself in the knowledge of Greek, might be proved by a great many anecdotes; but Blackwell's opinion or rather decision will produce greater conviction upon the minds of most readers. Upon a stated and fixed day (3d of April, 1750) Beattie, according to an annual custom, was to try his skill with his class fellows. James Beattie had the distinguished honour of receiving a Greek Grammar from Principal Blackwell with the following words written by the Principal's own hand: "Jacobo Beattie "ἀριστευοντι in Græcis literis hoc βραβειον "dedit J. Blackwell." This Grammar is

in the possession of those whom the Doctor made his heirs.

This competition is thus noticed in the Aberdeen Journal, 3d of April, 1750, a news-paper which had been begun to be published a few years before, and is still the only provincial paper for Aberdeenshire. "The same day the premium "given by Principal Blackwell towards "the end of the session to the best scho- "lar of his first class, was, after a severe "trial, adjudged to James Beattie from "Laurencekirk; and that given to those "who re-enter the class a second year, "was won by Duncan Davidson from "Ross-shire. The trial was an Analysis "of part of the fourth book of the "Odyssey—and the students were close "locked up while they wrote it."

From a very early period it appears to have been a common practice to excite emulation among the students of Marischal College, who attend the Greek class, by means of a comparative trial. Whe-

ther Principal Blackwell had originally suggested, or had only sanctioned it by his example, no records I have seen can determine. Lord Buchan, well known for his taste in polite literature, and for his patronage of literary men, established a good many years afterwards what, in the technical language of Marischal College, is called "The Competition for the Silver Pen." The trial consists in translating a passage from some Greek classic. No silver pen is actually given to the young gentleman who is successful—his name is honourably affixed to one, and he generally receives a present of Dr. Clarke's Homer. *Such* an expedient excites, in a generous youth, certainly a more noble emulation than any pecuniary reward.

It may not be improper to remark by the way, that this kind of competition seems to have been familiar to Aberdonians from a pretty early period. In the Grammar School of Aberdeen there is "A Silver Arrow." But whether success

in his studies, or a more ignoble qualification, that of being a good archer, recommended the successful candidate, I will not determine, as the history of this curious circumstance seems to be forgotten. The names of such as were victorious may still be seen attached to it on silver plates.

I have conversed with several of Beattie's class fellows. They unanimously affirmed, that he was considered superior to any of his class. This is no small testimony of his proficiency. Boys do not iudge very accurately upon many things. Upon the figure which one of their companions makes at college or even at school, they are impartial and unexceptional witnesses. In the Scottish colleges (that of Edinburgh excepted) the different classes are examined publicly before all the professors and such of the students of the other classes as chuse to attend. This, in Aberdeen, is called "The Black-stone lesson;" a name derived from

a custom that still exists in King's College, Aberdeen. When the students are examined, they sit upon the grave-stone of Bishop Elphinstone, the founder of that college. The Bishop is buried in the public hall. It may be proper to add, that the dead body of every professor, both in the colleges of the old and new town of Aberdeen, is always deposited in the hall of that university to which he belonged, upon the night before the funeral. I have not been able to ascertain the origin of those singular institutions, but it is probable that they may be traced remotely to some established forms of the Church of Rome.

At "The Black-stone lesson," to which the students look with great anxiety, Beattie distinguished himself very much.

Beattie's proficiency, during the first year of his college course, is the more remarkable, because he was then in a very delicate state of health. An anecdote frequent-

related by his brother proves this.—When David was about to leave Aberdeen, James accompanied him to a street called the Green. When they had separated, David could not resist the temptation to look back, and perceiving James still standing in the middle of the street looking after him, he said to himself, how can I leave such a poor creature in Aberdeen for the winter; he cannot surely survive that period. He had boarded him with a distant relation, a Mr. David Langlands, whose son, if I mistake not, is an eminent counsellor in London. Beattie's health nevertheless was but little altered during that winter.

On his return to Laurencekirk it improved considerably. During the vacation, which at this college is seven months of the year, he applied to his studies with unremitting industry. His old friend James Milne, while he was elated with the success of his pupil, did not fail to lend

his assistance to his favourite scholar, to enable him to retain what he had acquired at the university.

At the proper period Beattie set out a second time for Aberdeen. Being a bursar, it was absolutely necessary that he should attend the different classes in the order prescribed by the statutes of the university, otherwise he could not apply for the degree of Master of Arts.

Beattie was frequently wont to express himself in terms of high commendation of professor David Verner. Though this man be little known in the literary world, he was a coadjutor not unworthy of Blackwell. His uncommon knowledge of the Latin language, and the facility with which he could both write and converse in that tongue, with elegance, was often the subject of Beattie's praise. Of his general qualities it is well known that Dr. Beattie expressed himself in terms of more unqualified panegyric than one of his pru-

dence and judgment could be expected to do of any person of moderate talents.

Verner was remarkable for the difficulty with which his hand-writing could be read. It is of him that the anecdote is related, that having sent a letter to a Glasgow professor, his correspondent wrote instantly, that as he could not read one word of it, he begged Mr. Verner would pay him a visit at Glasgow, and read it to him. This circumstance is scarcely worth the recording, were it not that I conceive it to have been one reason of Dr. Beattie's inculcating so earnestly on his students the necessity and conveniency of forming the letters so as that they could be easily read by themselves and others. He himself was remarkable for this. His opinion upon the subject is to be found both in the Essay on Memory, and in his Elements of Moral Science.

Verner was a wit also; and though he did not lose his influence nor authori-

ty in the public school, he sometimes indulged himself in that vein of humour which those who possess it find so great difficulty in restraining. Some of his jokes Dr. Beattie long remembered, and took great pleasure in relating.

Beattie, though possessed of unquestionable genius, never discovered any great attachment to mathematical pursuits. He sometimes expressed in conversation his own antipathy to that noble study, rather in strong terms. The turn of his mind does not seem to have led him to cultivate the science of *quantity*, for proficiency in which Dr. Reid and Dr. Smith were so eminent. Whatever light such an antipathy may throw upon the peculiarity of his mental character, it is certain that it produced no good effect during the period of his professorship.

The mathematical chair in Aberdeen was founded by Dr. Duncan Liddell, upon the 9th December, 1613. I owe this information to an account of Liddell, drawn

up by Mr. Stewart, the present excellent professor of Greek in Marischal College, and published in the year 1790. With the exception of the professorship of divinity, that of mathematics alone in Marischal College, is under the patronage of the magistrates of the burgh of Aberdeen. In the latter case, however, a competition must take place; and, in the will of Dr. Liddell, the curse of God is solemnly "denounced against any person who shall "abuse or misapply,' the money he had appropriated for that purpose. The illustrious names of Colin M'Laurin, and of John Playfair, are to be found among the candidates for this professorship. Mr. Patrick Copland, the present professor, to his other qualifications adds those of being one of the best mechanics and most interesting lecturers on mechanical philosophy of which any university can boast.

Though Beattie discovered no particular partiality to the mathematics, it is plain from his Essay on Truth, and other works,

that his powers of abstraction were not incompetent to have distinguished him as a mathematician. To be eminent for proficiency in any branch of knowledge is no small praise. Yet I know not how it has happened, that mathematicians have very generally been supposed to possess powers superior to those of any other denomination of philosophers. I would ask any man, does it not require as great abilities, as indefatigable application, to become a thorough master of a dead language, for example, as to be an eminent algebraist or geometrician? And in the lists of the names of learned men, are there not a greater number remarkable for their great proficiency in the latter than in the former?

The discoveries of Newton had excited an uncommon degree of ardour in mathematical study among the British youth. The great M'Laurin had the unquestionable merit of effecting this in Scotland. Surpassed by none in his eminence as a

mathematician, at once acquainted with the ancient and the modern geometry, and profoundly skilled in the modern analysis, he was also an early admirer of the doctrines taught by Sir Isaac. To these qualifications he added those of being an admirable classical scholar, and a very popular lecturer on the mathematics. I rather imagine, however, that the same success, as a teacher, had not been experienced by him in Aberdeen, which he met with in Edinburgh, because a zeal for this kind of study was not remarkably cherished there for a considerable time after M'Laurin (about the year 1721) went to Edinburgh.

The late Professor Stewart held the mathematical chair when Beattie was at college. It is no great reproach to Stewart to affirm, that he was *not* a successor worthy of M'Laurin. He was, however, thoroughly master of the elements of the science which it was his province to teach. In his public appearances he was rather pompous,

Perhaps the peculiarities of Stewart may have disgusted Beattie with the mathematics at an early period of his studies. Or rather the beauties of the Roman and Greek classics had taken so strong a hold of his imagination, that he could spare no time for any thing else.

I cannot help contrasting the great difference between M'Laurin's successor, in Aberdeen, and his successor in Edinburgh. They were both Stewarts. Matthew Stewart of Edinburgh was unquestionably one of the most profound geometricians which any country ever produced. Enthusiastically attached to the ancient geometry, he rejected with disdain the use of algebraick symbols in his investigations. He was a pupil worthy of Dr. Robert Simson of Glasgow, with whose taste in the mathematics he seems to have been deeply tinged. Mr. Dugald Stewart was at a very early age assistant and successor to his father, Dr. Matthew Stewart. He afterwards succeeded Dr.

Adam Ferguson as professor of moral philosophy, which chair he now holds with so much reputation to himself, and to the University of Edinburgh. Mr. John Playfair succeeded Mr. Dugald Stewart as professor of mathematics, so that for a period of no less than fourscore years some of the most distinguished mathematicians of Europe have held that professorship.

Besides the study of mathematics, Beattie's attention was, during the second session, directed to *history, geography, chronology,* with an introduction to *natural history.* Much general knowledge is to be obtained from the prelections of an able professor upon these subjects. They contribute very much to the enlargement of the human faculties, and fit a man for maintaining any situation in life with respectability. It is necessary to remark however, that the particular province of each professor was not then defined with the same accuracy which was deemed ex-

pedient about two years afterwards. A distinct department was not allotted to each professor. But every professor began with a particular set of students, who remained during the academical course, under his tuition, and received all the branches of their instruction from him. A good deal in this case depended upon the abilities and favourite pursuits of the teacher. If he were a man of slender parts it is improbable, when his studies were so very miscellaneous, that he could make great proficiency, and distinguish himself as an able professor. The present arrangement, which allots a particular branch of instruction to each professor, is much better adapted for general usefulness in consequence of the ordinary standard of the abilities of men.

He who is acquainted with the history of philosophy, or even with the fluctuating opinions of men, cannot surely be at a loss to account for an arrangement, to be met with not only in the British, but in

the greater number of the universities of Europe. Those seminaries were established before the Reformation. Science had made but little progress, and men's opinion of their attainments is very often in proportion to the smallness, rather than the greatness of those attainments.

Of Dr. Francis Skene I have been able to collect very little. For the long period of forty-one years he discharged the duties of his office, and was reckoned a good teacher. The third year of the course, at Marischal College, is now confined to what is generally called natural philosophy. In this science, from Beattie's ignorance of mathematical learning, it is not to be supposed that he made much progress. It is a misfortune that the greater number of those, who have chiefly devoted their attention to moral science, have been but little acquainted with the Newtonian philosophy.

It ought however to be mentioned that Mr. Beattie was possessed of as much

theoretic knowledge of the mathematics, and practical skill as to make a *quadrant*. With this instrument he took the altitude of the church of Laurencekirk, &c.

I have not been able to ascertain whether Beattie studied any time under professor William Duncan, the translator of Cicero's Orations, &c. and the translator also (a fact which is not generally known) of the second volume of what is commonly called Watson's Horace. Duncan succeeded Dr. Verner about the month of July 1752. And it is likely had taught Verner's class for the former session, as Verner died in the January preceding, after having been thirty-four years a professor in Marischal College. Duncan however was not admitted a regent, or one of the fundatæ personæ of the university till the 21st of August, 1753, some months after Beattie left it.

SECTION III.

The same Subject continued.

IT is unnecessary to observe that Beattie uniformly returned to Laurencekirk at the conclusion of each session. In his mother's hospitable mansion, and by the frank and generous exertions of his brother, he was enabled to prosecute his studies without interruption. Dr. Beattie, as well as almost all his relations, possessed a very correct ear for music. Even at a period preceding this, the natural impulse of his mind had induced him to cultivate his talents in this way. And it is certain that he practised, in the most busy part of his life, what he recommended to other students in his works, and what constituted the favourite amusement of Luther and of Milton, in the intervals between their usual hours of serious study.

Beattie was now about to enter the

highest class in the academical arrangements in the University of Aberdeen. He could not have been more fortunate in a professor than in the person who, at that time, was to be his teacher. This was Dr. Alexander Gerard.

At the commencement of this session a new order was established in the college, which has been observed ever since. Not that any very material alteration actually took place in what was taught, but a particular definite province was assigned to each professor, which it was consequently in his power to prosecute with greater energy and success.

The deed of the University, as it throws considerable light upon the system of education established in Aberdeen, I have introduced in this place.

Marischal College, 12th Nov. 1752.

"The principal, professors, and masters of this university, having had long under their consideration the present *method* of academical education, whose plan, origi-

nally introduced by the scholastic divines, in the darkest times, is more calculated for disputes and wrangling than to fit men for the duties of life; and being after the most mature deliberation fully persuaded, that the present ORDER observed in teaching the sciences is, since the reformation and improvement of philosophy, improper and perverse; because when students enter young to the university, the gradual openings of the human mind, as well as the natural order of things require they should begin with *particular facts, sensible objects,* and *easy conceived connections*; that from thence they should proceed to learn *general reasonings,* though still on *familiar* and *material* subjects; and last of all come to the *abstruser* enquiries concerning the *nature of spirits,* the *operations* of the mind, the *attributes* of the *Deity,* and the *moral* and rational sciences founded thereupon; whereas, now, young raw students are all at once plunged in the most difficult sciences, and

the most abstracted from sense; and fruitless attempts are made to teach them the foundations of *evidence*, and the theory of reasoning before they know any thing of the sciences that afford *examples* to illustrate the various kinds: *therefore*, the foresaid principal, professors, and masters, in order to render the study of the sciences more natural and progressive, and to fit their students to be *useful in life*, do unanimously resolve, statute, and enact, that henceforth the following general order in teaching shall be observed in this University:—I. That the *first* year shall be wholly employed in *classical literature* under the *professor of Greek* as formerly, being the indispensable foundation of all scholarship.—II. That the *second* year of the academic course shall be spent in teaching *history*, *geography*, *chronology*, and an introduction to *natural history*, commonly called *special physics*; at the same time that the whole students of this

class shall attend the lessons of the *professor of mathematics*.—III. That the *third* year be employed in the scientific parts of *natural philosophy*, the laws of matter, &c. commonly called *general physics*—such as *mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics*, and *astronomy*.—IV. That the *fourth* and *last* year be allotted to the study of the *abstract sciences, pneumatology, morals* and *logic*, or the art of reasoning.

And the said principal, professors, and masters, being likewise persuaded by the most *obvious* reasons, that it will highly tend to the promotion of learning and improvement of education, that each professor be employed in cultivating and teaching *one* particular branch of knowledge, they do farther unanimously resolve, statute, and enact, that henceforth *Mr. Francis Skene*, and his successor in office, shall continue to teach *history civil* and *natural*; *Mr. William Duncan*, and his successors, *natural phylosophy*; and

Mr. Alexander Gerard, and his successors, *moral philosophy*, and the *abstract sciences*.

(Signed) T. BLACKWELL, Principal.

This paper, as well as a small pamphlet published about the same time, was written by Dr. Gerard at the desire of the University. If I might judge from the style, and a few favourite expressions, I should have no doubt in deciding that it was partly the composition of Blackwell.

This is not the place to give a critique upon the plan of education here delineated. It embraces a wider circle than any of the other four colleges in Scotland could afford at the same or even for a long period afterwards. I do not deny that there were then a greater number of professorships established both in Edinburgh and Glasgow. I only affirm that the regular course established in Marischal College was superior for the purposes of obtaining general knowledge, and answering all the ends to be derived from an acquaintance with

polite literature, and the elementary principles of moral and physical science. From local situation it is not reasonable to think, that as a school for medicine, or even for the study of law, Aberdeen could ever vie with Edinburgh or Glasgow.

About this time a most uncommon zeal for the cultivation of moral philosophy and criticism began to discover itself in Aberdeen; and a groupe of congenial spirits, by a strange and apparently fortuitous concourse of circumstances, were associated. Reid, Campbell, Gregory, Skene, and Gerard, were philosophers to whom few parallels can be found. It may be attended with some advantage, if I briefly state a few of the circumstances which contributed to fix the attention of these illustrious men more peculiarly upon subjects of moral and literary speculation. Such an account is not only interesting in itself, but a distinct view of the progress of Beattie's studies cannot be otherwise given.

It is a singular fact in the history of the philosophy of human nature, that the three different parts of the united kingdom have each produced one of three men whose studies and writings have excited a very high degree of interest in the minds of modern philosophers. I allude to John Locke, George Berkely, and David Hume. It would be difficult to determine what individual of the three possessed the greatest share of natural acuteness. Bishop Berkely was an admirable mathematician. As a man of general knowledge he, therefore, in this respect had the advantage of the other two. Locke and Berkely were zealous defenders of the truth of Revelation. Hume, though originally intended for a clergyman, was the champion of infidelity. His deductions however from the doctrine of Locke were perfectly just and legitimate. They had each their several admirers. Dr. Reid himself, one of the most profound philosophers of modern

times, has confessed that he once disbelieved in the existence of matter.

The peculiar doctrines of these men had raised an uncommon degree of solicitude among the young students. Other causes co-operated to revive a taste for ethics, which it is difficult to represent to those who have little knowledge of the state of literature in Scotland at that time.

The prelections and writings of Dr. Francis Hutcheson contributed very essentially towards exciting great attention in Scotland to the science of morals. He had been a dissenting clergyman in Dublin, where he published the first of his philosophical works. The wonderful eloquence of his lectures, and the excellence of his manner of delivery, greatly increased the fame of the University of Glasgow; and encouraged many students to repair thither. Among these Dr. Smith is to be numbered.

The writings of Mr. Hume and Lord

Kaimes had directed the attention of the studious youth to the improvement of their taste in polite literature, and to the prosecution of speculative inquiries. In this school it may be said Dr. Adam Smith was reared, who, under the patronage of Lord Kaimes, was the first in Scotland who delivered a private course of lectures on rhetoric.

At this busy period the courses of the different professors of moral philosophy in Scotland began to assume a new form. Much more regard was had to scientific arrangement; and the different departments of their prelections, while they comprehended a greater number of particulars, became in a higher degree interesting and instructive to those who attended them.

The Literary Society in Aberdeen, of which Reid, Campbell, Gregory, Skene, and Gerard were members, had existed several years before Beattie was added to their number. The object of their

association was mutual improvement in literature and philosophy. The liberal intercourse which subsisted between the members must have greatly promoted the progress of their several studies. Not only the excellence of their different works, but the great similarity of the doctrines they have inculcated, both in philosophy and polite literature, shew that they were not inattentive to the suggestions of one another. What probable improvement Beattie derived from this we shall have occasion to notice as we proceed.

It is a peculiar circumstance that the greater number of those who have made an eminent figure in the history of the literature of Scotland have either been clergymen, or intended to be clergymen, or the sons of clergymen.

It is difficult to say, whether Thomas Reid's illustrious ancestry (being by the maternal side descended from the Gregorys) his modesty, or his uncommon at-

tainments in almost every branch of science, were most remarkable. He brought himself first into public notice by an "Essay on Quantity," published in the Philosophical Transactions of London, for the year 1748. His father was minister of the parish of Strachan, a sequestered spot among the Grampian mountains. He discovered very early a genius for the mathematics, an inheritance which he doubtless derived from the Gregorys.

An account of Dr. Reid is prefixed to a late edition of his works, by professor Dugald Stewart of Edinburgh. A circumstance in Reid's history (related in conversation by the late Principal Campbell) is worthy of being recorded. He could at once take as much food, and immediately thereafter as much sleep as was sufficient for two days. No other literary character of whom I remember to have read could do the same, excepting Dr.

John Lightfoote, well known for his great knowledge of Hebrew literature.

I dare scarcely venture to delineate the character of Dr. Reid after so great a philosopher and excellent a writer as Mr. Stewart. Possessed of very great natural acuteness—of uncommon vigour of understanding, he investigated every subject to which he directed his attention, with the most patient, laborious, and indefatigable application. The philosophical candour, with which he examined the opinions of others is to be discerned in all his writings; while the perspicuity and elegance of his style is most remarkable, even when treating of the most abstruse doctrines of philosophy. He was a successor fully worthy of Dr. Smith. These two illustrious men began their great career as public professors in the same year. On the 14th of January, 1751, Dr. Smith was unanimously chosen to succeed Mr. John Lowdon as a professor in Glasgow;

and, on the 29th of October following, Dr. Reid, on the death of Mr. Alexander Rait, was elected a professor of King's College, of Aberdeen. Smith in his turn might almost be said to have succeeded the great Dr. Francis Hutcheson, because Mr. Thomas Craigie (Hutcheson's immediate successor) only taught for one or two sessions, if I mistake not. No other university can furnish an instance of three as celebrated moral philosophers, almost immediately succeeding one another in the same chair.

Principal George Campbell was the son of Colin Campbell one of the ministers of Aberdeen. Though originally intended for the profession of the law, he afterwards studied divinity. He was first presented to the church of Banchory Ternan, in the immediate vicinity of that parish where Reid was born. In June, 1757, he was called by the magistrates of Aberdeen to be one of the ministers of that city. On the 9th of May, 1759, he was present-

ed by the Crown to the principality of Marischal College. And in the year 1772 was chosen successor to Dr. Gerard, as professor of divinity in the same university.

Dr. Campbell was not inferior in natural acuteness even to Reid. Perhaps he was superior. The learning of both was great. Reid, however, had this advantage, that he was a most accomplished mathematician. To this Campbell had little or no claim. The duties of their several public professorships necessarily gave a different direction to their studies. Their works do honour to British literature; as being unquestionably entitled to the very first rank in their different departments. But as the subjects treated of, in by far the greater part of Dr. Campbell's works, are so different from the subject of Dr. Reid's writings, it would be idle to institute a comparison. It is but fair to add, that "The Philosophy of Rhetoric" is, perhaps, the most admirable work on criticism with

which the world has been favoured since the days of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian.

Dr. John Gregory was also one of the original members of "The Literary Society." Descended from a line of philosophers, to which no parallel in the history of mankind can be found, he was not unworthy of the greatest of his ancestors. He, as well as Dr. James Gregory, was devoted to the study of medicine. Upon the death of his brother James, he was elected (20th November 1755) professor of medicine in King's College, of Aberdeen. In conjunction with Dr. David Skene, he began, upon the 3d of November, 1750, a course of medical lectures. From want of due encouragement they were obliged to relinquish the design. He was removed to Edinburgh, and taught with great reputation two of the medical classes, alternately with Dr. William Cullen. He died suddenly upon the 10th of February, 1773. The following beautiful

lines, alluding to this event, with which the "Minstrel" concludes, afford an admirable idea of his many excellent qualities:—

— but ah! I strive in vain,
Sighs from a breaking heart my voice confound.
With trembling step, to join yon weeping train,
I haste, where gleams funereal glare around,
And mix'd with shrieks of woe the knells of death resound.

LXII.

Adieu, ye lays, that fancy's flowers adorn;
The soft amusement of the vacant mind!
He sleeps in dust, and all the Muses mourn,
He, whom each virtue fired, each grace refined,
Friend, teacher, pattern, darling of mankind!
He sleeps in dust. Ah, how should I pursue
My theme! To heart consuming grief resign'd,
Here on his recent grave I fix my view,
And pour my bitter tears. Ye flowery lays, adieu!

LXIII.

Art thou, my Gregory, for ever fled!
And am I left to unavailing woe!
When fortune's storms assail this weary head,
Where cares long since have shed untimely snow,

Ah, now for comfort whither shall I go!
No more thy soothing voice my anguish cheers;
Thy placid eyes with smiles no longer glow,
My hopes to cherish, and allay my fears.
'Tis meet that I should mourn: flow forth afresh
my tears.

Dr. David Skene did not distinguish himself as an author after the manner of his celebrated associates. From the reports however of many competent judges, it is undoubted that he was a man of great abilities, well acquainted with polite literature, and, with the exception of Dr. Reid his habits of scientific disquisition superior to those of any other of the members of the Literary Society. Like the Gregorys, his profession was that of medicine. After deriving every advantage which his attendance upon the medical school in Scotland, then in its infancy, could afford, he went abroad. Whether he resided any time at Leyden, I know not; but at Paris, at that time eminent as a school for surgery, he prosecuted his

studies with the most unremitting industry. On his return to his native country, he, at Aberdeen, received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. I have hinted above that an attempt to deliver a course of medical lectures was made by him and Dr. Gregory. Dr. Skene however at the same time began another course on midwifery, and in the public advertisement the following remarkable intimation is given: "Such as are poor will be not only attended, but maintained in bed and board at Dr. Skene's expence till their recovery." He hereby both discovered his humanity, and his zeal for the interests of his profession.

Dr. Alexander Gerard, whose name I mentioned last, was unquestionably a most excellent philosopher. His father had been Minister of the Chapel of Garioch, a remote parish in Aberdeenshire, where the Doctor was born. His mother thought proper to reside in Aberdeen after the death of her husband. On the 14th July, 1752, Dr. Gerard was admitted a

member of Marischal College, in room of professor David Fordyce, who perished in a storm at sea when he was returning home from his travels. During the session 1753-4, in conjunction with professor Duncan, he taught the class of natural and experimental philosophy. On the 24th May, 1759, he was chosen, on the death of Dr. Pollock, professor of divinity in the same university, and consequently one of the ministers of Aberdeen. In the same year, with the permission of the Edinburgh Society for encouragement of arts, sciences, manufactures, and agriculture, Dr. Gerard offered a gold medal for the best dissertation on style in composition, he himself having gained the premium, in the year 1756, for the best essay on taste. In the year 1773, he became professor of divinity in King's College, Aberdeen.

Gerard's regularity and distinctness in every thing he had to do were astonishing. If he had any public appearance to make

he was never unprepared. It is to him that Beattie alludes, Essays on Memory and Imagination, pp. 51, 52, 53, when he says, "that by two hours application he "could fix a sermon in his mind so effec- "tually as to be able to recite it in public "without the change, omission, or trans- "position of the smallest word." His Essays on Taste and Genius are well known. Beattie's opinion of his master is to be seen in p. 146 of the same essay quoted above.

What the plan of Gerard's course of lectures on moral philosophy and logic was I am unable to say. It is probable that in its general outline it did not differ much from that of Dr. Beattie. It is certain that when Beattie succeeded to the professorship he was favoured with Gerard's manuscripts. Owing to the short time that intervened between his being appointed a professor, and his being obliged to undertake the duties thereof, it was impossible that he could have discharged

these by any other means. Beattie however did not pace sluggishly in the footsteps of his predecessor, but like a philosopher and a man of genius thought for himself, adopted his own arrangement, and invented his own illustrations; the only course by which he could either improve himself, or interest effectually the students that attended him.

Gerard's Essay on Taste was written while he was a professor. From this it is very plain that he had paid great attention to such kind of disquisitions. Further I cannot affirm. It would be desirable however to know more, as it is intimately connected with Beattie's history. Some light might thus be thrown on his early years, and it might furnish us with the means by which his future favourite studies could be unfolded. One curious circumstance we learn from Beattie himself, which is not altogether unconnected with this subject. In the preface to an edition of the Essay on Truth, published in the year 1776, we

are informed that "he knew nothing of "Mr. Hume's writings till within the last "eighteen years." He surely must have heard something of Hume's system of philosophy from Dr. Gerard, otherwise the course must have been more superficial than one would have expected from a man of Gerard's talents and industry. And besides, even in England, several authors of high literary reputation (Dr. Hurd, &c.) had animadverted upon some of the opinions of that very uncommon man before the year 1758.

I may have been too minute in the account I have given of those members of the literary society, who were most distinguished for their abilities. Those men however were both directly and indirectly the means of accelerating Beattie's progress. In their small republic, while every one contributed his share, the stock was accessible to all. While their knowledge, and their habits of observation or reflection were increased, or in general their in-

tellectual powers improved, their emulation was at the same time excited. Any fact observed, or theory, or hypothesis, originally started by an individual, became common property. This could not fail to contribute most powerfully to the developement of the faculties of all the members, and was surely one cause of their cultivating moral science and criticism with so much success.

The regular course of Marischal College is completed in four years. No one can apply for the degree of master of arts who has not attended the classes in the order prescribed by the statutes of the university. Beattie at the usual time (in the end of the session 1753) took his degree. This ceremony was always public till he himself from a dislike to what he considered to be ostentation, or perhaps from some other cause made it private. During his professorship it was public only for sixteen years, and was private for the nine following years. In 1786, how-

ever, the graduation, as it is technically called, was public. His oldest son took his degree that year.

SECTION IV.

History of Beattie while Master of the Parish School of Fordoun.

I Have now brought down Beattie's history to the period when he left college; that is when he had completed his term at those classes which gentlemen generally attend who propose nothing else than obtaining the benefit of a liberal education. To the greater number of young men this must be considered as one of the most important periods of their lives. When they were sent to the University, the design was that they should be thereby fitted to discharge with propriety and honour the particular duties of the profession of which they had made choice. A youth of modesty or delicacy, however aspiring his views, however slender his finances, and whatever sense he might have of the difficulties which he had to encounter before

he accomplished his aims, was now obliged to declare himself. If his parents (or as in the present case) if others had hitherto supported him, or had exerted themselves to the utmost in his behalf, it was reasonable that some probable plan should be laid down whereby either he or they should have the prospect of being remunerated.

Whatever gratitude Beattie felt for the kindness and generosity of his brother, he was under little difficulty of this kind. Though possessed of genius, his finances were not very ample. And those in his circumstances who aspire to the advantages of a liberal education are in Scotland generally devoted to the church. To this sacred profession easier access is obtained in all countries than to those of a physician or a lawyer. Beattie had been early destined for a clergyman, but through causes which shall be afterwards explained, this original design was frustrated.

About the beginning of April 1753, he returned to Laurencekirk, and waited pa-

tiently for some employment which would not greatly interrupt the progress of his studies. Three ways are generally resorted to by young men destined for the church, whereby they attempt to promote the object they have in view. They either become tutors in a family which can afford to give them some salary; they commence private teachers; or they teach a public school. The majority of young men prefer the first of these situations, not that it is either more agreeable, or during the term of it more independent; but it is the only mean whereby their preferment in future life can principally, if not solely, be promoted. A life of dependence is very disagreeable to a man of spirit. And the peculiar advantages and disadvantages of that very dependent situation can only be estimated by those who have undergone its drudgery. Those families whose pretensions are highest, and their poverty greatest, are, with very few exceptions, the most intolerable. They seem to consider

a tutor as little above a mere menial servant. Though apparently preferred to the same rank with the other members of the family, he is exposed to those marks of degradation which affect so acutely every man of sensibility. In a few rare instances he may be treated with hospitality, and even with kindness and regard. A more than ordinary portion of good sense, as well as benevolence however generally distinguish such persons. Beattie was not exposed to the pain or uneasiness of mind to which the vanity and pride of mankind subjected many of his fellow students. Advantages however necessarily accrue even from such a situation. Some knowledge of what is called the world is obtained which might not otherwise be easily arrived at. A self command is also acquired, and an ability to restrain that propensity to deliver on all occasions and on all subjects those spontaneous sentiments which the natural independence of a cultivated mind feels such incitement to ex-

press, and which it imagines that all shall receive with approbation.

Private teaching cannot be successfully carried on but in a large town. Neither can an adequate compensation be afforded, but by such as are in affluent circumstances. Contiguity of situation is also necessary, which in the country cannot be looked for.

Beattie either wanted friends to procure him the former, or inclination to prosecute the latter. Upon his return to Laurencekirk he was always treated with the greatest kindness and attention by the Rev. Andrew Thomson, minister of that parish. This gentleman possessed an excellent library, was a very good scholar, and was among the very first who patronized Beattie in early life. Mr. Thomson's knowledge of the original languages in which the scriptures are written was very great. He had read with great accuracy the Hebrew Bible, and his habits of study being regular, he laid it down as a

rule to read at least a chapter each day. His zeal for professional knowledge was great. To his other qualifications he added that of being one of the most eloquent preachers of which the church of Scotland could boast. I do not merely affirm that he was one of the most popular clergyman in that part of the country. Such a criterion must be esteemed very uncertain and fallacious, as the weakest men often succeed best in that way. To the excellence of his delivery he superadded other qualifications which were more substantial and valuable. He possessed uncommon ability in interesting and impressing his audience. This he could never have accomplished, if, beside his other qualifications, he had not been also remarkable for his powers of imagination. It is still remembered that Mr. Thomson took great pains as well as great pleasure in directing the studies, and superintending the progress of Mr. Beattie. Any opportunity Beattie had at that time of

consulting books was solely derived from the kindness of his parish minister. It will be remembered by a good many readers, that the poet Thomson experienced similar acts of kindness from the Rev. Robert Riccalton, of Hobkirk, a clergyman (it may be remarked by the way) who had never attended any divinity hall, but who possessed what no adventitious circumstances alone could possibly confer: he was a scholar and a man of genius.

It was necessary, however, that Beattie should now engage in some employment, and endeavour by his own exertions to support himself. To teach a school was the only way that was left for him. Young men in his situation are much circumscribed in their time, in consequence of the hours which they must necessarily spend in school. It is a singular fact, however, that few have distinguished themselves as literary men, who have not had great difficulties to encounter. Their habits of industry and perseverance were

thereby improved, and they were taught practical lessons which they could have never acquired in any other circumstances.

Beattie's character, as a good scholar, and a young man of genius, was justly, on his return from college, so very high, that he ran little risk of being an unsuccessful candidate for any of those situations which are in general request by such persons as propose to be, and those who, in Scotland, are, students of divinity.

While Mr. Beattie resided with his brother, the neighbouring parish of Fordoun was deprived of its schoolmaster. He applied for, and easily procured that humble appointment. Its emoluments were small. He was then about the age of nineteen, as he entered upon his new employment in the end of 1753, or in the beginning of 1754.

With what ability he acquitted himself as the teacher of a school, in a remote country village, cannot be described with the utmost accuracy. What one would

not have expected, I have been informed, upon evidence the most unquestionable, that he was a very severe disciplinarian. It is likely that he did not sit very easy under his new employment. His views were more aspiring than his situation at that time could warrant any hopes of ever having it in his power to gratify. The teazing detail of the business of a country school was but little accommodated to a young man like Beattie. It is necessary that a schoolmaster should devote his time, his talents, and his pursuits to those placed under his tuition. Any object, either higher or lower, is not calculated to benefit the scholars; and this (whatever other qualification the master may possess) is the ordinary standard whereby his ability is estimated.

Beattie's manner and address are represented as having been at this time blunt, and rather uncultivated. He had hitherto but little opportunity either of conversing or associating with his

superiors, in regard to fortune. It is in such society that any little awkwardness of manner is most likely to be corrected; and no general rule can possibly accomplish this so effectually. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, wherever he went he always gained friends, and found individuals who did themselves honour by patronizing him as a man of genius.

About the time he went to Fordoun he began to send his little poetical compositions to the Scots Magazine. This periodical publication commenced about the year 1738. Whoever conducted it, an association of Edinburgh booksellers were the proprietors. Ruddiman, the relation of the grammarian of the same name, and the author of The Life and Adventures of Peter Williamson, the best imitation which has yet appeared of the popular romance of Robinson Crusoe, had not at that time begun to publish his Magazine. A considerable number of Beattie's poems in the Scots Magazine are under fictitious

signatures. They are in general, however, subscribed with the initials of his name.

One of his earliest patrons was Mr. Francis Garden, afterwards Lord Gardenstone. This man was a kindred spirit both in his favourite studies, and his convivial talents. Disposed to express himself with a frankness and freedom, bordering upon what the more squeamish part of mankind would term rudeness and incivility, he had much of the milk of human kindness. His learning was neither accurate nor extensive. He possessed however a considerable knowledge of the Latin tongue, and had acquired at an early period of his life a facility in versification. His acuteness, the readiness with which he could express himself in distinct and appropriate language, upon any subject, has been long acknowledged, in Scotland. When a judge he was always candid, and by an amiable infirmity he leaned to the weak side, and was instinctively what the law of England

requires all judges to be by a sense of duty, "Counsel for the accused."

Mr. Garden was sheriff of Kincardine-shire when Beattie went to Fordoun. He did Mr. Beattie a service which at that period of his history was not a small one. He afforded him his patronage, and introduced him to the principal gentlemen of the county: not the principal in point of fortune alone, but to those also who were qualified to appreciate real talents, and who possessed the aristocracy of genius. It must be confessed that few parochial schoolmasters ought to be compared with Mr. Beattie. There are, however, still fewer patrons like Lord Gardenstone. Every one is desirous to have the honour of patronizing those who have no immediate need of his assistance. The exertion appears to be spontaneous, when it is accompanied with the reflection that one's beneficence, at a small expense, may receive a great remuneration. It is easy to

patronize a man who has by his writings already rendered unnecessary the influence of any individual to bring him into public notice.

While at Fourdon he resided in the house of James Anderson. The Rev. Mr. Forbes, at that time minister of the parish, shewed him many marks of kindness. He very soon discovered Beattie's abilities, and though he held them in just estimation, he was not blind to his defects. Beattie's situation, as parish schoolmaster, was early perceived by Mr. Forbes not to be very congenial to his inclination, nor adequate to his deserts. He generously wished that an opportunity might occur on which it might be in his power to afford him those recommendations which he so justly deserved. An opportunity of this kind, however, did not present itself for some time.

To become an excellent schoolmaster is not unworthy of the ambition of any man who is called upon to exercise that office, what-

ever abilities he may possess, or whatever may be the bent of his studies. But the fact cannot be disputed, that without patient industry no success can be expected; and it is perhaps impossible to acquire this without being an enthusiast in the profession, for which few have been remarkable, whose emoluments were small.

A great number of the parochial school masters in the north of Scotland are either students of divinity, or preachers of the Gospel. They consequently do not consider that occupation as an ultimate object. They look forward to the duties of another profession. And men of liberal education, whose minds have been cultivated by literature and philosophy, are, perhaps, less qualified to undergo the drudgery of teaching a country school than those who are in every respect their inferiors.

It is not to be wondered at then if Mr. Beattie did not express a great predilection for his employment. He was busily occupied in pursuits which presented a

higher charm to one of his fervour of imagination; and while, from principle, he punctually discharged the duties of an instructor of the youth, there can be little doubt that he felt an impulse to exert those energies of mind which the inhabitants of a considerable part of the shire of Kincardine ascribed to him.

Even when Beattie was a schoolmaster there was much greater encouragement in Scotland to exert himself in that profession, than there is now, or than there has been for a considerable time past. The children of the genteelest families were almost invariably sent to the parochial school. The teacher was on a more respectable footing, and his emoluments were considerably greater. He had more reason to be satisfied with his situation, without which his exertions could neither be great nor uniform. In consequence of good encouragement, it is reasonable to presume that men of superior abilities

would chuse that profession for life, who have at present no inducement to do so.

If the generality of Scotsmen are better educated than the same ranks in most other countries, it must be entirely ascribed to the schools attached to every parish. The history of their establishment would form a curious subject of disquisition. I believe no such institution existed before the Reformation. The plan was well contrived. Those who in this country took an active part in accomplishing the Reformation deserve, in this respect, the grateful thanks of their countrymen.

Any comparison between the abilities of the former and the present schoolmasters, in Scotland, would be very invidious; while it could not be in any degree correct, because the merits of many are not known. One thing is certain, that in proportion as the encouragement decreases they must degenerate. This has been decreasing for years; and I am very sorry to say, that

there is little prospect of the schoolmasters being placed in a comfortable situation.

There are few in the country, comparatively speaking, who can afford to send their children into towns for their education. This, however, was unnecessary, when every advantage they desired could be obtained by attending the parish school. An acquaintance with the learned languages was much more generally diffused through the country, and a greater stock of useful knowledge was consequently acquired. Less of the boy's time was lost, and he derived the unspeakable advantage of being educated under the immediate inspection of his parents.

A change of manners has been in some measure introduced, in consequence of the children of those who possess a great stake in the country being educated in distant places. Their attachment to the spot which gave them birth is much impaired. If they find it inconvenient to be absent from their estates, their residence

among their tenants is not so much a matter of choice, as otherwise it would have been. They are virtually strangers; because they have not, like their ancestors, received their education at the same school, and been bred up in the bosom of their tenantry.

The discharge of the duties of Beattie's office, was not incompatible with his attendance at the Divinity Hall; at least what is reckoned attendance.

Before any one can be licensed to preach in the Church of Scotland, it is necessary that he shall not only have previously attended the classes of philosophy, but he must also be enrolled as a student of divinity for a certain number of years, and have delivered, with the approbation of the professor, a certain number of discourses. The number of years depends upon the regularity with which the student attends the prelections of the professor. Young men, like Beattie, who are obliged to teach a school in order to enable them

to attain the object of their ambition, cannot give regular attendance. They must be contented with a term very short indeed. The greater number of them take their leave of the Hall for a session, when they have delivered the prescribed discourse.

When Mr. Beattie was enrolled as a student of divinity, Dr. Robert Pollock, and Mr. John Lumsden, held the chairs of theology in the University of Aberdeen. The former in Marischal College, and the latter in King's College. He who attends the lectures on divinity in the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, or St. Andrews, is only required to deliver five discourses—a lecture, a homily, an exegesis, what is called an exercise in addition, and a popular sermon. In Aberdeen however double that number are delivered, *viz.* five in each college. When Beattie found it convenient he delivered his discourses, because no fixed day is mentioned to the student. He is at

liberty to take as much time to prepare himself as he chuses. The public are well acquainted with the appearance which Thomson made upon a similar occasion. It would be desirable to know after what manner Beattie acquitted himself. It is improbable that he would indulge his imagination in that liberty which the author of the Seasons did not restrain. I have formed this opinion from the style of the preface to the poems he published soon after.

Very little is left for a biographer to relate of one in Mr. Beattie's circumstances while at Fordoun. He had his public duty to perform which consisted in teaching a school, and on each Sunday in officiating as clerk, or what in Scotland is called *precentor*. Every parish schoolmaster must do the latter as well as the former, or pay another for doing it.

Of his particular studies during this period an exact account cannot be given. There is little doubt that a very considera-

ble portion of his time was devoted to the classics. However excellent his abilities were he could not have otherwise reached that degree of eminence which he attained. Sudden and irregular fits of study are incapable of producing very great effects, because the lot of man is such, that proficiency in any branch of knowledge cannot be reasonably expected without laborious and long continued application. Notwithstanding that the bent of Mr. Beattie's mind seems to have led him to the cultivation of polite literature, it may be observed that it was one of those studies which a person in his situation could best prosecute with success. He had not to submit to the drudgery of learning the elements; and he was in the possession of some of the best classics, having necessarily purchased them when at school and at college. Such books are also most commonly to be met with in a country place, where public libraries have not been established.

At Fordoun also he amused himself by

composing little poems. Many of these were shown to his friends, who universally agreed in their admiration of his poetical talents. They transcribed some of them, and they were handed about in a certain circle. Mr. Beattie, as I mentioned above, sent those which he most esteemed to the Scots Magazine. Those effusions of his Muse are sometimes dated from Aberdeen, at other times from Kincardineshire, or from Fordoun. And one which we shall have occasion to notice hereafter is different from all the rest.

There is some difficulty in ascertaining exactly all the verses contributed by him, because an Aberdeen bookseller of the name of Francis Douglass, and a Mr. Charles Gordon, a writer in Aberdeen, who had a great facility of expressing themselves in rhyme, were much in the practice, at that time, of sending their verses to the same periodical publication. The greater number of Mr. Beattie's pieces have his name affixed to them, and

even though they had not, a good judge, by a little attention, would easily distinguish the more important of his compositions from those of Mr. Douglass, or of Mr. Gordon.

It is probable that soon after he went to Fordoun he was engaged in the translation of Virgil's pastorals. This he published in the first edition of his poems. In the preface we are informed that it was written at a "very early time of life when solitude "left the mind at liberty to pursue, without any fixed design, such amusements "as gratified the present hour." This appears to suit no period of his life so well as that which elapsed between his going to Fordoun in 1753, and his brother David's removing from Laurencekirk, and taking up his residence at Fordoun in 1755.

Among those fugitive pieces which were not republished by Dr. Beattie, there is one that was composed on his reading the declaration of war which was made upon the 17th May, 1756. This poem is dated

from Kincardineshire, 7th June, of the same year. A short extract from it will afford some idea of his talent at versification at that time.

Fir'd by your country's wrongs, arise to arms
Ye brave, whose breasts a British spirit warms!
Defend the best of Kings, your rights assert,
And let the faithless find their just desert.
Hawke, and Boscawen! clad in terrors, go,
And hurl red vengeance on the treach'rous foe.
Far as the sea extends his watry reign
Tell to the world, Britannia rules the main;
Proclaim that by the fixed decree of heav'n,
To her the empire of the sea was giv'n:
This send in thunder to each hostile ear,
Let haughty nations tremble when they hear.

It concludes thus:

O thou Supreme! whose hand the thunder forms,
Wings the red light'ning, and awakes the storms;
Whose word or lays the peaceful waves asleep,
Or into mountains heaves the roaring deep;
At whose command the kingdoms rise and fall,
Whose awful nod o'erturns the trembling ball;
Makes horrid war, and boist'rous tumult cease,
And glads the nations with the sweets of peace!
With joyful success crown our just design,
And let thy face upon our armies shine;

In the dread day of danger and dismay,
Propitious point to victory the way,
Still war's alarms once more, and let thy smile
With peace and plenty crown Britannia's isle.

SCOTS MAG. Aug. 1756.

I have purposely avoided making any remarks upon the poems Mr. Beattie published after he was a professor, because they will come naturally to be considered when we bring down his history to that period. There is one however in that collection which it is necessary to introduce in this place, as it was the cause of making him better known, and rescuing him from that obscurity with which he had hitherto been surrounded. It was an unprofitable business in every sense of the word to send his poetical essays to a magazine. Being anonymous he could not even acquire fame by them. And it was only requisite that his powers should be brought into public notice, to receive that patronage to which they were so well entitled. His poetical talents were well

known to his friends, but an event of a very melancholy nature furnished him with an opportunity of justifying the opinion entertained of him.

On the 7th October, 1757, two brothers bathing in the Westwater, a river at no great distance from Fordoun, were unfortunately drowned. They were found soon after fast locked in each others arms. Mr. Beattie was requested to write an epitaph. It is still to be seen engraved on a tomb-stone, in the church-yard of Lethnet, in Angus-shire, the parish in which the accident happened. I have inserted it at full length, as few have had an opportunity of seeing it.

To this grave is committed
All that the grave can claim
of two Brothers, David and John Leitch,
Who on the VII of October MDCCLVII,
Both unfortunately perished in the Westwater;
The one in his XXII, the other in his XVIII year.
Their disconsolate father, John Leitch, Tenant in
Bonnington,
Erects this monument to the memory of

These amiable youths;
Whose early virtues promised
Uncommon comfort to his declining years,
And singular emolument to Society.
O thou! whose steps in sacred rev'rence tread
These lone dominions of the silent dead;
On this sad stone a pious look bestow,
Nor uninstructed read this tale of woe;
And while the sigh of sorrow heaves thy breast
Let each rebellious murmur be suppress;
Heaven's hidden ways to trace, for us how vain!
Heaven's wise decrees how impious to arraign!
Pure from the stains of a polluted age,
In early bloom of life, *they* left the stage;
Not doom'd in lingering woe to waste their breath;
One moment snatch'd them from the power of death.
They liv'd united, and united died;
Happy the friends whom death cannot divide!
November 1st, 1757.

It may appear to be somewhat disrespectful to the memory of an author, to bring forward any part of his works which were afterwards disclaimed by him. To this I answer, in the first place, that Dr. Beattie's fame is so deservedly high, that it cannot be injured by this. And secondly, that it is otherwise impossible to give a

faithful delineation of his mental character, or to exhibit a view of the progress of his mind.

It has become very common for modern biographers to fill their narratives with little else than unqualified panegyrick. They may thus pay a tribute of affection and gratitude to their departed friend, or to him who is the object of their admiration. But the hero of the tale, in this case, is an ideal personage, and only fit to be introduced into a work of fancy. Delicacy and good manners indeed require that (as Metastasio expresses it) one should not be exposed to public view in his shirt and night-cap; yet, unless a true representation be given, it can do little honour to those whom it is intended to exalt, and cannot serve the interests of mankind.

Such a faithful detail of circumstances is particularly necessary in the history of a poet. The common aphorism, Poeta nascitur non fit, has perhaps misled many. To presume that a poet's imagination is

unsusceptible of improvement, would be extremely absurd. Besides many subordinate qualifications are necessary to the production of a good poem, which ought rather to be ascribed to art than to any original peculiarity of mental character.

These general observations might, perhaps, have been spared, in as far as they regard the introduction of the above epitaph. It is not unworthy of a poet even of Beattie's rank. The first part of it is expressed with considerable felicity of diction, and exhibits a specimen of that distinct simplicity of language for which the philosophical and critical works he afterwards published are so remarkable. The poetry is smooth and harmonious, and, though a severe critic might object to one or two expressions, there are couplets not unworthy of Dryden or Pope, the greatest masters of English versification.

With what success he had studied the best English poets, at a very early time

of life, is abundantly testified by this effort of his Muse. He had not yet completed his twenty-second year, and had to struggle with difficulties, of which those who have ready access to the conversation of men of genius, and to an ample library, have perhaps no conception.

Whether he had been in the habit of composing frequently upon subjects connected with polite literature during his residence at Fordoun, I know not. It is not very probable that much of his time was spent in this way. The propensities of his mind led him to be occupied after a different manner. If I might hazard a conjecture, not founded upon one or two passages of his writings, but derived from those kind of illustrations which he most generally adopts, I should presume that the writings of the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and those of Addison in particular, had been read and admired by him at a very early time of life. His admiration

indeed seems to have been excessive, and the impression such as could scarcely have been afterwards made.

It is also worthy of being remarked, that he was required to write at least two discourses for the Divinity Hall, during each session, an exertion which will not be reckoned inconsiderable by those who are acquainted with the difficulties that young men encounter in their first attempts in composition. He who, like Mr. Beattie, is ambitious to execute his task well, and to acquit himself with honour, will bestow double pains upon it. Any spare time he may possess is thus altogether consumed.

I have already mentioned that the whole family of the Beattie's possess an admirable ear for music. Mr. David Beattie and Mr. James Beattie had from their earliest years attempted to perform upon the violin. Of their comparative progress I can form little or no estimate. They sung well. Those, however, who must

be allowed to be competent judges, have affirmed that Dr. Beattie's voice was by no means equal to that of his brother's. Even before Mr. Beattie went to Fordoun, he had made considerable progress both in the theory and practice of music. He was not, however, contented with the proficiency to which he had attained, and during his residence there he cultivated his powers in that way with uncommon success. There are few poets who have not entertained, and expressed, a very great predilection for music. Of all poets, ancient or modern, Milton has spoken most feelingly of music, and like one who had derived much pleasure from that elegant amusement.

It would be desirable to know who the individuals were with whom Mr. Beattie principally associated at this time. In a country village there is not great opportunity of making a selection. The minister, Mr. Forbes (of whom he always spoke in terms of the highest regard), and a few

others, were the individuals with whom he was best pleased to spend any time that could be spared from his studies.

SECTION V.

The Circumstances attending his Removal to the Grammar School of Aberdeen.

THOUGH not altogether discontented with his situation, Mr. Beattie had for a considerable time looked out for some preferment which would contribute to his comfort, and place him in the way of improving himself in his favourite pursuits. The first opportunity of this kind was in consequence of a vacancy in the Grammar School of Aberdeen, occasioned by the death of Mr. John Smith, one of the masters.

At what period the Latin language began to be taught in a separate school in Aberdeen, I know not. The present Grammar School may be said to have been founded by Dr. Patrick Dun, Principal of Marischal College. He had been early designed for the medical profession; and,

as was the fashion of that age, he went to the University of Padua, at that time the most famous medical school in Europe, that he might prosecute his studies to greater advantage. He remained there till he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine, when he returned to his native country.

It may presumed that Dr. Dun had been fully persuaded of the necessity of instituting a good school, before the system of education in his native town could be in any measure complete. His patron, Keith, Earl Marischal, had given a most illustrious proof of his patriotism, by establishing and endowing an University. And about thirty years afterwards Dr. Dun imitated that example, upon a scale suited to his fortune, and executed a deed in the year 1628, and again in 1631, by which he appointed a rector, with a salary of six hundred merks, and three masters, or as he calls them in his will, doctors, with a salary of two hundred merks each, who were to teach the Latin language.

He constituted the magistrates of the burgh of Aberdeen the patrons, or rather the trustees, who should take care that the terms of his will should be strictly and literally fulfilled. They, together with the professors of Marischal College, and the clergy of the town of Aberdeen, are the visitors of the school.

In order that none might hold any office in the school, but those who were perfectly competent to the duties of it, he enacted, that upon a vacancy the merits of the candidates should be ascertained by a comparative trial. If, however, any candidate of the name of Dun, or a tenant, or the son of a tenant on the lands of Ferryhill (the lands from which the revenue of the school arises) in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen, shall be found qualified, he shall have the preference without a competition.

An advertisement is several times inserted in the newspapers, that such as propose to be candidates may be informed

of the day appointed for the competition. The manner wherein this trial of skill is conducted, is pretty similar to what I formerly stated in regard to the competition for a bursary; with this difference, that the trial, as might be expected, is much more serious. It is held in the Town-house. The candidates are required to translate *ad aperturam libri* passages selected from some Latin authors, both in prose and poetry. The judges ask such questions as they think proper. A piece of English is then put into their hands to be turned into Latin; and, in addition to this, they are sometimes required to write a translation of a passage of Horace or Virgil. They are allowed to retire to a different room, and have full time granted them to perform the last two of these. The whole is carried on with the utmost candour and impartiality.

Whether Mr. Beattie, for any considerable time, had it in view to stand a candidate for supplying the first vacancy

in the Aberdeen Grammar School, cannot be ascertained. I rather imagine that he had not. I have been informed by various persons, who had an opportunity of knowing the circumstances of the case, that Mr. Forbes, his parish minister, was among the first, if not the very first, who proposed it to him. Mr. Beattie is represented as having been rather diffident at this time. Though he had very short warning, he was however prevailed on to repair to Aberbeen, and try his strength. Mr. Forbes not only gave him an ample certificate of moral character, but also letters of introduction to Dr. Campbell and others of his acquaintance in Aberdeen, who were visitors of the school.

The day appointed for the comparative trial was the 23d November, 1757. Two candidates only appeared; Mr. James Smith and Mr. Beattie. Of Mr. Smith's history I have not been able to collect any very full account. He was an Aberdonian, and his father a blacksmith. It is likely

that he was related to Mr. John Smith, whose death had occasioned the vacancy. He had taught with great reputation in the town of Perth, and by every account was an excellent and an experienced teacher.

Very little is now remembered of the comparative merit of the two competitors, or of the figure that each made when examined. Next day, the 24th, Mr. Smith was unanimously declared to be the successful candidate. Mr. Beattie however did not retire from this contest with disgrace. The examinators gave him reason to expect that (if not otherwise better provided for) he might expect to be preferred to the first vacant ushership. And that he ought not to be discouraged. The letter he carried to Mr. Forbes of Fordoun contained a very honourble testimony of his abilities.

That Mr. Beattie was at this time a very good scholar admits of no doubt. He had however perused the Roman classics

principally for his own amusement. And whilst he caught their beauties, and entered into their spirit, it is not improbable that he had not as yet examined the grammatical niceties, and idiom of the language, with that scrupulous attention which he bestowed some time afterwards. In appretiating the knowledge of Latin, which a candidate may possess, chief stress is justly laid upon the version. But the facility and accuracy, with which any one can write Latin, depend in a good measure upon practice. It is scarcely possible to avoid falling into barbarisms, or what is inconsistent with the purity of the language without having acquired the ability of thinking in that language, or making it an instrument of thought.

I am not disposed to exalt Mr. Beattie at the expence of Mr. Smith. The issue shews that Smith was no despicable scholar. But I think that Smith's long habits of teaching; the necessity he was under of reading the classics; and the

practice he had long been in of examining, and correcting the versions of his scholars, and pointing out the various ways in which any sentence might be translated from English into Latin, or from Latin into English, gave him (other circumstances being equal) a decided superiority over so young, and inexperienced a man as Beattie. A man of Beattie's sensibility must upon such an occasion have felt so great anxiety, as to have prevented him from distinguishing himself as he would otherwise have done.

Beattie bore this disappointment with great spirit. He did not accuse his judges of partiality, as some of his admirers have most unjustly not scrupled to do; neither did he by his present failure give way to despondency, nor value himself lower than he had done formerly. He himself seems to have thought that he had not made a contemptible appearance, because in answer to the first question put to him

by Mr. Forbes, on his return to Fordoun, "How he had succeeded," he immediately replied, that he had succeeded very well, and then delivered his letter.

No reasonable objection can be stated against recourse to a comparative trial that a vacancy, where merit alone is required, may be filled up. A solid objection however may be made to the extent of the trials which are prescribed. A man may be an admirable scholar, and exceedingly unfit for the duties of a schoolmaster. He may be uncomplying in his natural temper—hasty or passionate to excess—his method of teaching may be bad—and he may want the ability of communicating knowledge to his scholars—or of gaining their affections. He may have given proofs of his inability to maintain proper authority, without which the most accomplished scholar will never be respected by his pupils. We must not expect to meet with every qualification in any individual. If

however the candidates were carried to the public schools, and caused to examine the class before good judges, a better estimate could be formed of their fitness for the office, than by the manner which is now generally adopted. This, though only a partial, it is apprehended would be a considerable improvement.

Beattie returned to his old employment at Fordoun, not without the expectation that he might succeed according to his wishes. He however did not procure, because he did not apply for an appointment to any other school. Some writers of his life have fallen into a great mistake when they have affirmed, that he was at one time a schoolmaster in Alloa in Fifeshire. I presume that "Fifeshire is a typographical error for Clackmannanshire," because there is no town called Alloa in the whole county of Fife. Mr. Beattie never taught any where else than in Fordoun and in Aberdeen. He him-

self was wont to laugh heartily at the notion of sending him to Alloa, one of the few towns in Scotland, said he, in which I never was.

About seven months after his competition with Mr. Smith, another vacancy occurred in the Grammar School of Aberdeen. Mr. Alexander Reid, one of the masters, and a preacher of the gospel, was presented to the church of Kemnay in Aberdeenshire. Whether the patrons of the school upon more serious consideration esteemed it a dangerous precedent to introduce any master into the school without a competition—or whether they had only expressed themselves in general terms to Mr. Beattie when he stood a candidate —or whether, as is more probable, it had been the opinion of two or three of the judges only that he ought to be preferred to the first vacancy I know not; but certain it is that an advertisement informed the public "That upon the 15th June,

"1758, a competition was to take place "for the Grammar School in room of Mr. Alexander Reid.

Mr. Beattie was not desired by those who had formerly examined him to come forward a second time. His brother and Mr. Forbes, however, did not fail to urge him to make a second attempt. For reasons best known to himself he would not comply with their solicitations, and therefore did not make his appearance on the day appointed. Two candidates however appeared, and when examined were declared to be unfit for the office. The patrons now considered themselves at liberty, without farther delay, to givet he preference to one who, they knew, was fully competent to acquit himself with honour, with credit to the school, and benefit to the public. Their choice fell on Mr. Beattie, who being invited by them to accept of the vacant office, repaired to the spot, and being inducted after the usual manner, taught there upwards of two years. Thus

having resided at Fordoun for the space of five years, he discharged the duties of a schoolmaster for the space of seven years.

SECTION VI.

His History while a Teacher in the Grammar School at Aberdeen, with an Account of the first Edition of his Poems.

MR. Beattie's situation was now very different from what it had been at Fordoun. He was in every respect more comfortable. He was a master in by far the most respectable seminary for classical literature in the north of Scotland. He was much more in the way of receiving the patronage of those who could promote his advancement. He had an opportunity of associating with literary men, and of obtaining access to books. These advantages he improved as well as he could.

His ardour however was considerably relaxed, and his studies interrupted by frequent head-aches. He had from his earliest years been afflicted with attacks of

that kind. They might however become more frequent in consequence of his removing from the country, and residing in a town. The necessary confinement to which he was subjected might likewise affect the general state of his health.

The hours of attendance required of Mr. Beattie were, if I mistake not, precisely the same with those at present established. He had to teach five hours on each day, Wednesday and Saturday excepted, when the classes do not meet in the afternoon. Two of those hours, by a regulation sufficiently absurd, are during summer and winter between three and five in the afternoon. The health, both of the master and scholars, cannot fail to be injured in some degree by being close pent up in a crouded room, where for a considerable part of the year it is necessary to keep so many candles constantly burning. Besides neither master nor scholars are so fit for mental exertion immediately after as before dinner.

The present arrangement however cannot be expected to give way to a new one till luxury, or an ambition to imitate the late hours of dining, which the higher ranks of society have established, shall have more generally invaded the Aberdonian public.

Similar hours of teaching were observed in the High School of Edinburgh; until, about the year 1778, it was found to be very inconvenient on account of the change which had been introduced as to the fashionable hours of dining. They now finish all their business before three o'clock.

The time which Beattie passed as a teacher in the Grammar School seems to have been very agreeably spent. He was more in his element, and as a natural consequence of that situation he either spontaneously, or at the recommendation of his friends, determined to exhibit a specimen to the public of what he was capable of performing.

It is not unworthy of remark that the

same paper which contained the first intimation of his intention to publish a volume of poems contained also a notification of the death of his colleague Mr. James Smith, who had only taught for two years and three months. It appears that he had never possessed a strong constitution. His popularity as a master, or some other motive, had induced him to commence private teaching, and he did not long survive those exertions. Mr. Fullerton, schoolmaster in the parish of Fetteresso, afterwards minister of Foot-Dee, Aberdeen, and one of the best scholars that ever taught in the Grammar School of Aberdeen, succeeded him upon the 23d of April, 1760.

The following advertisement, in the Aberdeen Journal, first informed the public of Mr. Beattie's purpose to publish some of his juvenile poems:

"18th March, 1760.

"This day are published, and to be had at the booksellers shops, proposals for

printing by subscription, in an octavo volume, with an elegant type and fine paper, original poems and translations by J. Beattie, M.A. Subscriptions will be taken in by all the booksellers in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and by Charles Thomson in Montrose."

A second advertisement appeared in the same newspaper upon the 8th of December following, that they were to be published about the first of February, 1761. And again upon Monday the 16th of February, 1761, "We are informed that this day is published, on a fine demy paper, and with an elegant type, price 3*s*. 6*d*. stitched in blue paper, original poems and translations by James Beattie, A.M. London, printed and sold by A. Millar in the Strand, and sold by the booksellers of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Montrose, and Aberdeen. Subscribers may be furnished with their copies at the shops of F. Douglass, R. Farquhar, A. Thomson, and A. Angus, Aberdeen;

and at the house of Charles Thomson in Montrose."

I may appear to be guilty of an anachronism when I propose to make a few remarks upon poems, some of which were written as early as the year 1756, after having deduced the history of the author as low as the year 1760. I was unwilling however to interrupt the relation of those circumstances which accompanied his establishment in the Grammar School, by introducing in the course of the narrative any extraneous matter.

Those pieces are not arranged in the order in which they were written. The time at which the greater number of them were composed can be pretty nearly ascertained. This may be esteemed a matter of very little importance, and so it is, were any thing of the kind attempted in a general critique upon the merits of an author's works. The case is different when it is attempted to give a biographical ac-

count of him; to delineate his studies, his employments, and the subjects which from time to time engaged his attention.

The causes that occasioned the particular order in which they passed through the author's mind, or proceeded from his pen, may have been remote, fortuitous, and apparently unconnected. They are all resolvable however into the association of ideas, one of the most powerful agents in the production of character, and which throws a very great preponderance into the scale whereby men estimate the degree of pleasure to be derived from any species of occupation. It is from a faithful induction of these, and other particulars, that any just notion can be formed of the favourite tendency of a man of genius.

I have already taken notice of the epitaph which Mr. Beattie wrote on the two brothers who were drowned in the Westwater. In the first edition of his poems we find another epitaph which it is plain

he designed for himself. This may be proved not only from the number of asterisks answering exactly to the number of letters in his name *James Beattie*; but also because, in the Scots Magazine for the month of May, 1757, the same verses, with some slight alteration in the expression, containing however one stanza more, subscribed Moriturus, and dated from Kincardineshire, 9th April, 1757, are expressly said to be intended for the author. It is a curiosity of its kind, because it is always of importance to know what an author thought of himself, especially when he contemplated an event so solemn as that of his own death. It is intitled An Epitaph on ***** *******.

Escap'd the gloom of mortal life a soul
Here leaves its mouldering tenement of clay;
Safe, where no cares their whelming billows roll,
No doubts bewilder, and no hopes betray.

Like thee, I once have stemm'd the sea of life;
Like thee, have languished after empty joys;
Like thee, have laboured in the stormy strife;
Been griev'd for trifles, and amused with toys.

Yet for a while 'gainst passion's threatful blast
Let steady reason urge the struggling oar;
Shot through the gloom the morn at last
Gives to thy longing eye the blisful shore.

Forget my frailties, thou art also frail;
Forgive my lapses, for thyself may'st fall;
Nor read unmoved my artless tender tale,
I was a friend, O man, to thee, to all.

Whether Mr. Beattie had been in a bad state of health at this time, or whether any serious dispensation of Providence, or something of a less important nature was the occasion of writing his own epitaph, it is impossible to say. Though apparently of a robust constitution, he was nevertheless very delicate, and this it is probable suggested to him the idea of exercising his poetical talents upon subjects which excited such images as are most congenial to one in that situation. The epitaph possesses a considerable degree of that characteristic merit, both in the imagery and versification, which distinguishes all the poems Dr. Beattie ever wrote. As he

has not thought proper to republish it, the insertion of it in this place will perhaps gratify some of his admirers.

If the rudiments of his Ode on Hope had not been sketched at a very early period, I am disposed to think, from a variety of circumstances, that it was written about the same time with the above epitaph. In its present state it does not differ either in the kind of verse or in the number of lines it contains, from what he first published. It is, in its present state, however, astonishingly improved both in harmony of expression and in the poetry. When I compare the two editions, I am much impressed with the great pains he must have bestowed upon it, as well as the great proficiency he had made, both in taste and in the copiousness of his poetical diction.

The Ode on Hope has been too long admired by every description of readers to require any laboured criticism, in illustration of its beauties. The powers of inven-

tion discovered, the novelty and variety of the allusions, and the figurative language introduced, entitle the author to the praise of distinguished genius.

An Ode to Peace, and a Song in imitation of Shakspeare's "Blow, blow thou winter wind," &c. to be found in the Scots Magazine for the month of September 1758, were afterwards publicly acknowledged by him.

The peculiar circumstances in which he was then placed perhaps suggested *Retirement* as the subject of the next poem, whose date can be ascertained. It is composed in Iambic measure. In "The Theory of Language," (p. 288) Mr. Beattie has remarked, that "it is now considered as lyric verse, and is very popular, and indeed very pleasing." This was also written in the year 1758. He has thought proper, in the editions of the poems of late years acknowledged by him, to withdraw the title of "*an Ode,*" which he had prefix-

ed to this pretty little poem, in the first edition of his verses. When they are compared by an impartial critic, it will be readily admitted, that in every instance where he has varied the expression the versification is much improved. Sixteen lines have also been added to what was originally published.

I cannot refrain from making a remark in this place, which will be more fully illustrated afterwards, that there are scarcely any of Beattie's poems but contain allusions to his private history; and those acquainted with it find no difficulty in making the application. This observation has been, in the present instance, suggested from what may not improperly be termed an Episode, introduced into the later editions of *Retirement*.

Oft let remembrance sooth his mind
With dreams of former days,
When in the lap of peace reclined
He framed his tender lays;

When fancy roved at large, nor care
Nor cold distrust alarm'd,
Nor envy with malignant glare
His simple youth had harm'd.

'Twas then, O Solitude, to thee
His early vows were paid,
From heart sincere, and warm, and free,
Devoted to the shade.

Ah why did fate his steps decoy
In stormy paths to roam,
Remote from all congenial joy!
O take the wanderer home.

Dr. Beattie published only two elegies. It may gratify the curiosity of some of his admirers to be informed of the circumstances which suggested the writing of the former. The lady, on whose death it was composed, was Miss Burnett, sister to the celebrated Lord Monboddo, whose country seat was in the parish of Fordoun. She was exquisitely beautiful, and was distinguished by her amiable manners and elegant accomplishments. Mr. James M'Kell, Beattie's predecessor at Fordoun,

a young man of genius, and of very promising talents, was most violently attached to Miss Burnett. I am ignorant whether (as has been sometimes hinted) his addresses were favourably received by the lady, but it is certain that in the issue he was not a successful lover. A Mr. Walker, from Aberdeen, had the honour to receive her hand; which affected poor M'Kell so much, that he died soon after. Mrs. Walker did not survive him long; for, upon the 25th of January, 1759, she was seized with an apoplexy, and died instantly. This melancholy event happened in the twenty-seventh year of her age. Some expressions in the elegy seem to render the opinion not improbable, that Mr. Beattie himself had been at one time a great admirer of Miss Burnett.

If Mrs. Walker died in January, 1759, so suddenly, it is evident that her elegy could not be written in 1758. I am disposed then to think, that the Doctor at the distance of seventeen years, had for-

gotten the precise year in which it was composed, when he prefixed to it "Written in 1758." The day and year of Mrs. Walker's death is extracted from a note of his own, affixed to that edition of the poem which is printed in the Scots Magazine for the month of March, 1759. Besides it is dated from Aberdeen, February, 1759, a very short time after the lady's death.

A very rude sketch of the second elegy is to be seen in the Scots Magazine for the month of March, 1756. It is, however, so very unlike what he afterwards published in the first edition of his verses, that it can scarcely be styled the same poem. Mr. Beattie seems to have been of the same opinion with Dr. Johnson, in regard to the nature of the elegy, and to have considered it merely as a short poem without points or turns. The subject of this elegy is "Sleep."

Notwithstanding the various merit which it unquestionably possesses, he has

not thought proper to admit it into the number of those poems acknowledged by him. I have introduced here the second and the third stanzas as a specimen:

Hail kind reviver! thou canst lull the cares,
And every weary sense compose to rest,
Lighten th' oppressive load which anguish bears,
And warm with hope the cold desponding breast.

Touch'd by thy rod, from Power's majestic brow
Drops the gay plume; he pines a lowly clown;
And on the cold earth stretch'd, the son of woe
Quaffs Pleasure's draught, and wears a fancy'd crown.

Mr. Beattie has not republished his translation of the twenty-second Ode of Anacreon; of the invocation to Venus, from Lucretius (v. 1—45.); of the tenth Ode of the second Book, and the thirteenth Ode of the third Book of Horace; or of the ten Pastorals of Virgil.

To make remarks upon all of these would exceed the limits I have prescribed to myself. It may be observed in general, that he discovers an uncommonly intimate

acquaintance with the originals; and that while he was anxious to adhere to the LETTER of those great masters, he was able to transfuse their spirit into his translation. The translation of Pollio, the fourth Pastoral, affords a striking illustration of the truth of the remark. Its insertion in this place will shew how strictly just the above observations are. In judging of its merits we must not forget the youth of the author, and the disadvantages under which a country lad must necessarily have laboured. It is a much more literal translation than Dryden's; and, consequently, to an unlearned reader conveys a juster idea of the original. Many of the stanzas besides will bear to be compared with the version of that illustrious poet.

Sicilian Muse, sublimer strains inspire,
And warm my bosom with diviner fire!
All take not pleasure in the rural scene,
In lowly tamarisks, and forests green.
If Sylvan themes we sing, then let our lays
Deserve a consul's ear, a consul's praise.

The age comes on, that future age of gold
In Cuma's mystic prophecies foretold,
The years begin their mighty course again,
The Virgin now returns, and the Saturnian reign.
Now from the lofty mansions of the sky
To earth descends an heaven-born progeny.
Thy Phœbus reigns, Lucina, lend thine aid,
Nor be his birth, his glorious birth, delay'd!
An iron race shall then no longer rage,
But all the world regain the golden age.
This child, the joy of nations, shall be born
Thy consulship, O Pollio, to adorn:
Thy consulship these happy times shall prove,
And see the mighty months begin to move:
Then all our former guilt shall be forgiv'n,
And man shall dread no more th' avenging doom of heav'n.

The Son with heroes and with gods shall shine,
And lead, enrolled with them, the life divine.
He o'er the peaceful nations shall preside,
And his Sire's virtues shall his sceptre guide,
To thee, auspicious Babe, th' unbidden earth
Shall bring the earliest of her flowery birth;
Acanthus soft in smiling beauty gay,
The blossom'd bean, and ivy's flaunting spray.
Th' untended goats shall to their homes repair,
And to the milker's hand the loaded udder bear.
The mighty lion shall no more be fear'd,
But graze innoxious with the friendly herd,

Sprung from the cradle fragrant flowers shall spread
And fanning bland shall wave around thy head.
Then shall the serpent die, with all his race:
No deadly herb the happy soil disgrace:
Assyrian balm on every bush shall bloom,
And breathe in every gale its rich perfume.
But when thy Father's deeds thy youth shall fire,
And to great actions all thy soul inspire,
When thou shalt read of heroes and of kings,
And mark the glory that from virtue springs;
Then boundless o'er the far-extended plain
Shall wave luxuriant crops of golden grain,
With purple grapes the loaded thorn shall bend,
And streaming honey from the oak descend.
Nor yet old fraud shall wholly be effac'd;
Navies for wealth shall rove the watery waste;
Proud cities fenc'd with towery walls appear,
And cruel shares shall earth's soft bosom tear;
Another Tiphys o'er the swelling tide,
With steady skill, the bounding ship shall guide;
Another Argo with the flower of Greece
From Colchos' shore shall waft the golden fleece;
Again the world shall hear war's loud alarms,
And great Achilles shine again in arms.
When riper years thy strengthen'd nerves shall brace,
And o'er thy limbs diffuse a manly grace,
The mariner no more shall plough the deep,
Nor load with foreign wares the trading ship,

Each country shall abound in every store,
Nor need the products of another shore.
Henceforth no plough shall cleave the fertile ground,
No pruning hook the tender vine shall wound;
The husbandman, with toil no longer broke,
Shall loose his ox for ever from the yoke.
No more the wool a foreign die shall feign,
But purple flocks shall graze the flowery plain,
Glittering in native gold the ram shall tread,
And scarlet lambs shall wanton on the mead.
In concord join'd with fate's unalter'd law
The destinies these happy times foresaw,
They bade the sacred spindle swiftly run,
And hasten the auspicious ages on.
O dear to all thy kindred Gods above!
O Thou, the offspring of eternal Jove!
Receive thy dignities, begin thy reign,
And o'er the world extend thy wide domain;
See nature's mighty frame exulting round,
Ocean, and earth, and heaven's immense profound;
See nations yet unborn with joy behold
Thy glad approach: and hail the age of gold!
O would th' Immortals lend a length of days,
And give a soul sublime to sound thy praise;
Would heaven this breast, this labouring breast inflame
With ardour equal to the mighty theme,
Not Orpheus with diviner transports glow'd,
When all her fire his mother Muse bestow'd;

Nor loftier numbers flow'd from Linus' tongue,
Although his sire Apollo gave the song;
Even Pan, in presence of Arcadian swains
Would vainly strive to emulate my strains.
Repay a parent's care, O beauteous boy,
And greet thy mother with a smile of joy;
For thee, to loathing languors all resign'd
Ten slow revolving months thy mother pin'd,
If cruel fate thy parent's bliss denies,
If no fond joy sits smiling in thine eyes,
No nymph of heavenly birth shall crown thy love,
Nor shalt thou share th' immortal feasts above.

Dr. Beattie's notions of translation are to be seen in the account of the life and character which he wrote of his son. Though Mr. Beattie's translation of Virgil's Pollio be not equal in spirit to the original, yet even a severe critic cannot deny that it possesses simplicity, and considerable felicity of interpretation. The conciseness of the original is most successfully imitated; and if some few stanzas could be improved in harmony, they are surely as literal as the genius of the two languages, and the different kinds of verse,

would permit. This is a proof, among many, of the correct sentiments, with regard to the principles of translation, which Mr. Beattie had formed at a very early period.

Dr. Beattie, at the conclusion of the paragraph lately referred to, adds, "On this principle he (J. H. Beattie) must have condemned some juvenile attempts of mine, but I have reason to think he never saw them, and I was too much ashamed of them to direct his attention that way." It is impossible to affirm with certainty whether the Doctor referred to his translation of the pastorals of Virgil alone. But certain it is, that the son had seen the first edition of those poems and translations which were first published by the father. Modesty and reverence for a father, and an unfeigned attention not to hurt his feelings, even upon the most trifling occasion, must have prevented him from ever hinting to Dr. Beattie, that he had seen them.

It was one of the peculiarities of Dr. Beattie's character, that he was very solicitous about his poetical fame. The numerous alterations and emendations of his poems are not so much here alluded to, as the zeal which he uniformly discovered to obliterate any remembrance of the verses composed by him at an early period. The latter presents a feature very characteristic of him.

He must be a very partial critic indeed who would insist upon estimating Dr. Beattie's poetical merit by his juvenile attempts. Yet no one could possess an accurate view of the progress of his poetical excellence, without having an opportunity of examining specimens of some of them.

The first edition of Beattie's poems is one of the scarcest books in the English language. To some this may recommend the extracts I have given. But whatever I have taken from that work, as well as from the Scots Magazine, would have been for ever suppressed by me, could they in the

least be made to affect his moral character, as many of the poems of Dr. Swift certainly affect his. I am sorry to add, that Burns is likely to meet with as ungenerous treatment as the Dean of St. Patrick has long experienced, by having many poems ascribed to him of the most profane and indelicate kind, which perhaps he never wrote.

There is every reason to presume that Mr. Beattie had paid an uncommon attention to the Latin classics, during his residence at Fordoun. When he was more particularly called upon to distinguish himself as a professional man, in the Grammar School, Aberdeen, it is not improbable that his diligence was redoubled, though no proof of it can at this distance of time be specified.

About a year after he was a master in the Grammar School of Aberdeen, he paid a visit to his relations, during the term of the usual vacation. Montrose being not far distant from Laurencekirk, he spent a

few days with a sister, and a Mr. Charles Thomson, town clerk of Montrose, at whose house subscriptions for his poems were taken in. Mr. Beattie wrote a poem called the Thomsoniad, of which this person is the hero. This visit would be altogether unworthy of notice, had it not given occasion to Mr. Beattie to exert a talent which he possessed in an eminent degree. Upon one of the days spent at Montrose, he, together with a few acquaintance, dined in the inn, then kept by Mr. John Beans. For what reason I know not, Mr. Alexander Wylie, a sheriff's messenger, a man, in regard to talent, superior to his station, was present; and through some ludicrous circumstances which then happened, and some allusions to Wylie's office, Mr. Beattie wrote at a side-table the following verses, which may literally be termed an impromptu. They appear to me to be well worthy of being preserved.

EPITAPH FOR A MESSENGER;

Written and published at the particular desire of the person for whom it is intended.

Alas how empty all our worldly schemes;
Vain are our wishes, our enjoyment dreams.
A *debt* to nature one and all must *pay*,
Nor will the *creditor* defer her *day*;
Death comes a *messenger*, displays the *writ*,
And to the fatal *summons* all submit.
An earthly *messenger* I was of yore,
The scourge of debtors then, but now—no more.
Oft have I stood in all my pomp confess'd,
The *blazon* beaming dreadful at my breast;
Oft have I wav'd on high th' *attractive rod*,
And made the wretch obsequious to my nod.
Pale shivering Poverty, that stalk'd behind,
His greasy rags loose fluttering in the wind,
And Terror, cudgel arm'd, that strode before,
Still to my *deeds* unquestioned *witness bore*.
Dire execution, as I march'd, was spread;
My threat'ning *horn* they heard—they heard and fled.
While thus destruction mark'd my headlong course,
Nor mortals durst oppose my matchless force,
A *deadly warrant* from the *court* of heav'n
To death, the sovereign messenger, was giv'n.
Swift as the lightning's instanstaneous flame,
Arm'd with his dart, the *king of catchpoles* came.

My heart, unmoved before, was seis'd with fear,
And sunk beneath his all-subduing spear;
To heaven's high *bar* the spirit wing'd its way,
And left the carcase *forfeit* to the clay.
Reader! tho' every ill beset thee round,
With patience bear, nor servilely dispond;
Though heaven a while delay th' impending blow,
Heav'n sees the sorrows of the world below,
And sets at last the suffering mourner free
From famine, misery, pestilence, and ME.
June 28th 1759. Mont. Abd. Ford.

Mr. Beattie's talents for wit and humour were very great. The specimen now given is a striking instance of the facility he had even then acquired in versification, and the ability with which he could put into elegant rhyme a great variety of ludicrous allusions to the profession of him whose epitaph he was thus unexpectedly requested to compose.

He had not resided long in Aberdeen when he was universally acknowledged to be a young man of genius. Classical learning has long been cultivated there; and those of the inhabitants who have a taste

for literature have frequent opportunities of meeting together. A man's abilities are consequently very soon ascertained. Mr. Beattie might have remained in obscurity for life, even though his knowledge of Roman literature had been much more profound than it really was, had he not possessed poetical genius. Otherwise he could never have excited so general interest, never have raised the admiration, nor called forth the good offices of the public. Poetry is more generally read than any other kind of composition; it is more agreeable to the taste of both sexes than the study of any art or science; and an individual rarely possesses the ability of excelling and contributing so essentially to the pleasure and happiness of his fellow-creature. These, as well as other causes, have no doubt stamped a value upon the productions of the poet.

SECTION VII.

From his Appointment to be Professor of Natural Philosophy, Logic, and Rhetoric, in the University of Aberdeen, till the Period of the Publication of the Essay on Truth.

MR. BEATTIE had, as I have already observed, published proposals for printing his poems. Many of his pieces were shewn to his friends, and from their opinion of the merit they possessed, the genteelest part of the inhabitants of Aberdeen were desirous of cultivating his acquaintance, and were anxious to be favoured with a perusal of his verses. His situation as master of the Grammar School, was also the means of introducing him into the best company in the town of Aberdeen.

In May, 1760, about two months after he printed his proposals, Mr. Beattie had

accepted of an invitation to dinner from the parents of one of his scholars. It required little sagacity to discover his superior abilities; and besides, his fame had gone before him. He was, however, at last requested to recite a part of a poem he had written. It had in a great measure escaped his memory. The specimen it was then in his power to give produced a great desire in those who heard it, to hear the whole. He accordingly went to his lodgings, and returned to the company with his manuscript. He was informed, however, either while he was going or returning from the place where he lived, of the sudden and unexpected death of Professor William Duncan. This information he naturally communicated to those persons to whom he was about to shew his poetical effusions.

There were now, it will be remembered, two vacant professorships in Marischal College, because Dr. Gerard had a year before been chosen Professor of Divinity

on the death of Dr. Pollock, and the chair of Moral Philosophy had not yet been filled.

It was suggested by Mr. Arbuthnot, at whose particular request Beattie had gone home for his poems, that a young man of genius, and who had produced such unquestionable proofs of his talents, would be a very fit successor either to Duncan or Gerard. In consequence of this conversation, it is likely Beattie received a considerable accession to his ambition; and, though conscious of his own powers, he was pleased with the favourable opinion of Mr. Arbuthnot.

This gentleman however did not confine himself to empty and unmeaning compliments; but generously offered to write in his behalf to the Earl of Erroll, Lord High Constable of Scotland. He actually prevailed upon his Lordship to recommend him to his Majesty, as one well worthy of being appointed to a vacant professorship.

The late Duke of Argyle had in those days the nomination to almost every office in Scotland under the patronage of the crown; and it is by no means improbable, that Lord Erroll's application had been principally regarded by his Grace. Yet it is certain, that others interested themselves in Mr. Beattie's success. The late Lord Gardenstone, in particular, made application to government, and in very strong terms recommended Mr. Beattie to those who were most likely to do him a service.

Nearly four months, however, had elapsed before Mr. Beattie was *officially* informed that the recommendations of his friends had proved successful, and had made him be esteemed in the eyes of those at the helm of affairs as a fit object of royal bounty. Towards the end of September, 1760, his Majesty's patent came to Aberdeen appointing him a Professor of Philosophy in Marischal College; *and on Wednesday, the 1st of October following,*

his Majesty's patent came to Aberdeen, to Mr. George Skene, appointing him also a Professor of Philosophy.

From the former part of this paper the reason will appear why they were both called Professors of Philosophy, in the patents they received. One particular branch of science, or a certain province, was not assigned to each particular professor, till upwards of a century and a half after the foundation of the College. And the private arrangement of the Senatus Academicus did not in the least affect the designation of their offices in the King's patent; though it was much calculated to accommodate the professors, and to promote the improvement of the youth committed to their care.

The newly appointed Professors, however, had both fixed their eyes upon the chair of moral philosophy. Though Mr. Beattie's patent had the advantage of being received a few days earlier than Mr. Skene's, yet this was considered as confer-

ring no additional title to precedence, as it regarded the right of choice. It was argued, that the whole plan of education, in the college, as it then (in 1760) stood, was a mere private stipulation among the professors themselves; the patents had nothing to do with the question at issue.

Whether the two Gentlemen actually cast lots, as I have often heard affirmed, I will not pretend to say, but upon Wednesday, the 8th of October, 1760, Mr. George Skene was admitted Professor of natural and civil history, and Mr. Beattie Professor of moral philosophy and logic.

Dr. George Skene was the son of Professor Francis Skene. He very early distinguished himself at school; and at college he was remarkable for the quickness of his parts, and the rapid improvement which he made in every branch of study. Beattie and he were not contemporaries at the university, because Mr. Skene entered college in the year 1754.

It is a curious circumstance, that Mr.

Skene, as well as Mr. Beattie, gained Principal Blackwell's premium. I have already mentioned the time when the latter received that honourable testimony of superior knowledge in the Greek language; and the former was declared the successful candidate, upon the third of April, 1755.

During the period which Skene spent at college, he was eminent for the universality of his powers, for a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, and for the strength and vigour of his judgment. His favourite study, however, was classical literature; and he seems to have imbibed Blackwell's strong partiality for the language of Greece.

He had been destined for the profession of medicine, and, even after he was a professor, in the month of July, 1761, he went to London, and from thence to Leyden, and prosecuted his studies at the latter place with great eagerness.

He discharged the duties of a professor

in Marishal College, for twenty-seven years, and was not only greatly respected by the students, but highly esteemed by his colleagues, and universally acknowledged to be one of the best scholars in the north of Scotland.

His practice, as a physician, became so extensive, that he was obliged to resign his professorship. Yet, in the midst of very various and important avocations, he still continued to devote some time to Greek and Roman learning. His favourite author was Homer.

On the 25th of March, last year, he was suddenly cut off by a fever, which he had caught when visiting some of his patients. The independence of his character was remarkable; and, as he thought for himself, he did not hesitate to express himself with that plainness and vigour of which none but superior minds are capable.

We have now deduced Mr. Beattie's history till he received as honourable, useful,

and respectable an appointment as any member of society can hold. He was undoubtedly more fortunate than most men. The discharge of all the duties of his office was perfectly compatible with the possession of much leisure, wherein he could both prepare himself for the better performance of those duties that were publicly required of him, and could prosecute other favourite studies without interruption.

It must be remembered that he obtained his professorship very unexpectedly. No one will therefore be surprised that, in his twenty-fifth year, Mr. Beattie was not so well prepared to deliver a course of prelections upon moral philosophy and logic, as he would doubtless have been, had he possessed time to examine and study those extensive, and in some respects, abstruse sciences with that express object in view.

The very circumstance of being obliged to write out a system of ethics or of logic so comprehensive in its outline as to deserve that name, is not the work of a few days.

And besides, as an academical course is designed to initiate the youth into the knowledge of a science, with the very first principles of which they are by supposition unacquainted, there is a necessity for a minuter detail and greater amplification, than if those to whom the course is delivered had made greater progress.

I have already hinted at the assistance Mr. Beattie received from Mr. Gerard his predecessor. In what manner he acquitted himself, during the first session, I know not. In a short time, however, by diligent application he made himself master of his subject, and produced a course of lectures of his own composition.

Moral philosophy is a science which seems to have been very congenial to his turn of mind. The various doctrines it contains are peculiarly interesting, and they present an extensive field of disquisition.

The assistance to be derived from books was not then nearly so great as it is now. The subjects which, as a professor, Mr.

Beattie was called upon to discuss, have, since that time, received great attention from philosophers, and a vast quantity of materials has been added to the stock. The ethical writings of the ancients are without doubt very valuable, but from (what may be called) the popular manner wherein they are composed, they do not suit the abstract and apparently more philosophical mode in which the moderns have treated the principal questions relative to morals. The difference may not be so great between the speculative opinions of the ancient sects of philosophy, and those of more modern date, respecting many important points; yet a more rigid kind of investigation is now demanded.

This change has been produced principally by the works of Gassendi, and of Locke. Those philosophers, while they have not rendered uninteresting the ethical writings of Aristotle, Cicero, and others, have, in a considerable degree, superseded

the laborious study of those authors, in a course of preparation for fulfilling the duties of a professor of moral philosophy.

The man who has not read and studied those monuments of ancient genius long before the period when he can reasonably expect to be a teacher, shall find, if ever he be placed in Beattie's situation, that he has begun rather too late. Dr. Beattie always caused his students to read in the class Cicero de Officiis.

As to the extent of his reading in the Greek classics, I presume that it was at this time not very great. His knowledge of the Latin tongue renders it almost certain, that even when a master in the Grammar School, he had studied Cicero with accuracy, and was consequently well acquainted with the doctrines of the ancient philosophers.

The particular occasion which introduced the remark that the writings of Gassendi and Locke have, in a great measure, superseded the study of Aristotle, Cicero, and

others, should be remembered. In a course of moral philosophy much more attention is now paid to the analysis of the principles of human nature; to an enumeration and arrangement of the faculties of man; and, in short, to the various operations of the human mind, than was formerly the case. Aristotle, in his Ethics, and in his books of the Soul; Cicero, in the fifth book of his Treatise de Finibus Bonorum et Malorum; and Arrian, have attempted something of this kind; but he must be strangely prejudiced, indeed, who does not allow that in accuracy and distinctness of arrangement they must yield even to Locke, not to mention the advances which the science of mind has made even since his days.

Locke seems (according to the vulgar expression) to have sprung a new mine in this science. The first effects of his philosophy, as might naturally be expected, were discernible in England; and, what may appear to many as a singular pheno-

menon, his own pupil, Lord Shaftesbury, though renouncing what he reckoned the prejudices of Locke, his tutor, profited wonderfully by the instructions of the author "*of the Human Understanding.*"

The whole of this detail has originated from an anxiety to afford a distinct view of the opportunities of information, which Mr. Beattie possessed when he was required to begin his career, as professor of moral philosophy in Marischal College, Aberdeen.

Some facts however must be stated, which more particularly refer to Beattie as a North Briton; and without allusion to these the account would be altogether incomplete. By those who are ignorant of the little intercourse which then subsisted between South and North Britain, what I am about to state may appear rather extraordinary. Those persons however, who are acquainted with the history of literature in Scotland, will not think me presumptuous.

Of the theological tenets of Dr. Clarke, I am not called upon at this time to give any opinion. In consequence however of the various prosecutions carried on against Professor Simpson, of Glasgow, for having taught the same or similar opinions (the precise heresy or heresies of which Simpson was accused, must be ascertained by the perusal of several different processes carried on against him) a very great interest was generally excited in Scotland to be acquainted with Clarke's other works, which bore no relation to the disputed doctrine or doctrines. His *Demonstration*, as it is called, was read with great eagerness, and afforded in Scotland, as it had done in England a new subject of speculation to those who had a philosophical turn of mind.

Though Clarke had taken very different ground from Locke, yet the revival of the dispute, and the distinct philosophical manner wherein Clarke's works were written, greatly staggered not only those who

did not understand his demonstration, or were doubtful of his first principles, but even those who did understand it, however unwilling they might be from previously espoused opinions to receive it.

The works published by the greater number of the Scottish professors had principally regarded jurisprudence in the most extensive sense of that word. The number of works of merit indeed published at the period referred to is, it must be confessed, very small.

The works of Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, and Cicero, had their influence in Scotland as well as in all the other nations of Europe. But from the wonderful alliance between the Scottish and Roman law, a kind of complection (if I may so express myself) had been given to the lectures of the Scottish professors of moral philosophy, as well as to the professors of the civil and the Scottish law.

The works of Grotius, Cumberland, and Puffendorf, were thought to contain

all that was useful or could be advanced upon the law of nature and nations. Professor Gershom Carmichael, of Glasgow, published an edition of Puffendorf with notes, about the year 1730; and this fixed the attention of literary men more strongly upon the subject.

Professor Hutcheson, whom I have mentioned above, did not publish his lectures; he only published a syllabus of them. Principal Leechman however, at the request of Hutcheson's son, a Doctor of Medicine, published them, and prefixed a short biographical account of the eminent author. From the syllabus it is plain that Hutcheson considered it to be his duty to follow principally the path which Carmichael, and his other predecessors had pointed out to him. It is but justice however to add, that his works contain by far the best system of jurisprudence that has yet appeared in Scotland. The public will I am afraid have occasion

to regret that Dr. Smith did not finish his long projected work upon that interesting subject.

I have purposely omitted in this enumeration the popular but beautiful essays of the Spectator, and other periodical writers. I have made no mention of Berkely's writings nor of those of Hume, nor of Lord Kaimes, because I have alluded to those three philosophers in a former part of this memoir.

Nearly a year before Mr. Beattie became a professor, Adam Smith had published his Theory of MORAL SENTIMENTS. This year forms as it were a new æra in the history of Scottish literature. Hume published his history of the house of Tudor. Robertson published his history of Scotland, and upon the eleventh of December, 1759, Dr. Blair began his lectures on Rhetoric. Blair had the example set him by professor Robert Watson, of St. Andrews, who, in winter 1755-6, after the

example of Dr. Smith (shewed him some years before) delivered a course of lectures upon the same subject.

I do not esteem Smith's theory so much for the ingenuity with which the singular proposition in the book is defended, or for the admirable and almost unprecedented fund of moral illustration which it contains; as for the masterly exhibition he has given of those various systems of philosophy which have been generally current. To this part of his work, in my opinion, no parallel can be found. In this kind of writing he excels all his contemporaries.

From those and other sources Mr. Beattie derived much information. His habits of study were regular and constant. Little time was spent in idleness, because he was ambitious to acquit himself with credit, and to benefit his students as far as was in his power.

An academical life is so barren of incidents that it cannot be expected to fur-

nish much in the narrative. The lives of most literary men consist of little more than a history of their works. His pleasant and agreeable manners, even at this time, have been much commended. To his old associates he was kind and affable. And at his house and table they were always welcome.

The Doctor informs us that his Essay on Poetry and Music, as they affect the mind, was written in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-two. It was delivered before the Literary Society, of which we have already given some account.

The only prose composition he had acknowledged, and I have reason to think that (besides the discourses he delivered in the hall) the only small pieces he had written, were his preface to the first edition of his Poems, and the short notes he added to the Pastorals of Virgil.

Mr. Beattie, with a felicity of arrangement peculiar to himself, has discussed

with great judgment and taste the subjects he had proposed to treat of in this essay. He was eminent as an elegant critic; and every deference is due to an authority to which the public have so long looked up. After a few introductory observations he, in the first chapter, treats of *the end of poetical composition.*

It has been very anxiously inquired, what *the end of poetical composition is?* and it may be affirmed that in the discussion of this subject a very considerable difference of opinion has prevailed among critics of the first eminence. It were a very desirable thing indeed to be able to point out those first principles upon which any art or science depends, or to exhibit one general respect wherein so multifarious a subject as poetry (for example) may be proved in all its departments to coincide. When we propose however to ascertain this, we are apt to run into two opposite extremes. Our definition may be either too comprehensive, or not expressed in

terms that are sufficiently general. It must be admitted that the latter happens fully as often as the former, because when any art or science has one principal object in view, we are disposed to assign it as the sole end, while many very material considerations are on that account overlooked.

In a disquisition of this kind it is natural to inquire what distinguishes poetry from prose. Our great Lexicographer has defined *poetry* to be metrical composition. But with all submission to so high an authority, it may be doubted whether this definition be philosophically true. Is it the *measure* only which distinguishes a poem from a prosaic work? It will not be affirmed that a mere narrative of facts, in whatever form delivered, whether metrical or prosaical, can by just rules of criticism be called a poem. The mere drapery, so to speak, is not a characteristic sufficiently important or discriminating to denote the one or the other of these kinds of composition. Qualities I presume of a much

more peculiar kind distinguish the poet from the annalist, the historian, or even the orator. The thought, the fiction, the figures, the beauty and variety of the images, more perfectly mark the nature of poetry than regular measure. Notwithstanding Dr. Beattie's opinion which could not fail to have a great effect upon his son James Hay Beattie, will any man (who has read or written a poem of half the extent) exclude the Telemachus of Fenelon from the rank it has so long held of being one of the most beautiful poems in any language? Shall the works of every wretched poetaster, who has acquired the school-boy facility of tagging rhymes together, be admitted into the catalogue of poems?

Is the end of poetry then pleasure or instruction; or must both be considered as comprehended under that term? No one will, I presume, deny that one chief end of poetry is to give pleasure. The peculiarities of the art may in a certain sense be referred to this as to their cause. Upon

what other principle can the FORM of poetical composition be accounted for, when it is so evident that it is of a nature much more artificial than mere prose? What necessity would there be for fiction, as the word poetry imports, were it not to please? Would not the poet otherwise confine himself to truth like the historian? Why does he study to embellish his work by the introduction of figures, which upon any other supposition would be perfectly ridiculous? And why, unless poetry were intended to please, is every good poet so anxious that his images be both remarkable for beauty and variety, in order that readers of good taste may not be disgusted on the one hand by vulgarity and impropriety, or cloyed on the other by a recurrence of the same allusions?

It has been admitted by all who have espoused the above theory, as well as Dr. Beattie, that instruction is often contained in the writings of good poets. And in every good poem, in every language, in-

struction may either be inferred from the general tendency of the whole, or from many very striking passages interspersed through the work. By instruction we must not conceive to be meant those truths which are addressed to the judgment only. When the affections are interested by the lively description of character, of manners, or by allusions to the works of nature, or by any other means consistent with the rules of poetry, instruction is indirectly conveyed to the mind. The characters drawn by the poet may not be exactly according to nature; that is, they are not exhibited according to the precise appearance which they present to the eye of the observer in any individual with which he is acquainted. They are still however consistent with verisimilitude, and those general properties are selected by which all individuals of that denomination are distinguished.

In poems of any length it has been most willingly admitted, that without in-

struction they could never produce the most agreeable effect upon the mind. But then Beattie and others have said that instruction is not the end, but is only employed as a mean to give pleasure. Be it so. Is it not remarkable however that poems, such as we are speaking of, would be perfectly intolerable without instruction? And on the other hand a dry didactic discourse, in whatever form composed, if destitute of poetical embellishment, could never be entitled to the character of a good poem.

What, I would ask, is the object of the epic poem, if it be not to instruct by an ingenious fable? Let it be supposed that in a work claiming this title the Homeric example, in regard to the structure of the poem, has been faithfully adhered to, and that it is adorned with the most beautiful imagery, the greatest harmony and elegance of language; yet if it want plausibility and consistency in the fable, it will be defective according to the rules of just

criticism. The same observation may be extended to tragedy and comedy. In the lighter kinds of poetry, this, though not perhaps so evident, may yet be implied.

The essay wherein these and other doctrines are contained, is so well known, that it appears to be an unnecessary labour to give a very full account of its contents. It is admirably calculated to initiate the youth into the general principles of criticism; and is undoubtedly one of the best treatises of the kind in the English language. The illustrations he has given of his particular doctrines are so many; or, in other words, there is so much amplification, that it is much adapted to serve those purposes for which it was originally composed.

The remarks on music which he has introduced are exceedingly ingenious, and very interesting; and discover a thorough acquaintance both with the theory and practice of that art. The style of all Beattie's writings is excellent; but if he

has surpassed himself in that respect in any part of them, it is (in my opinion) in the chapter appropriated to music in this essay. A fastidious critic might perhaps affirm, that the connection between the chapter referred to, and the other parts of the essay, is not very apparent; and that it ought rather to be considered as analogous to what in poetical composition is called an episode.

During the interval that elapsed between the composition of his Essay on Poetry, &c. and his writing, in the year 1764, the Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition, he was busily employed in polishing his lectures, and in making them more useful to the youth committed to his care.

The general doctrine of this essay, though not so copiously treated, had been laid before the public by Dr. Campbell in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. It is worthy of being remarked, that the authors of both performances have informed the pub-

lic that they had followed the same train of thought when assigning the cause or object of laughter, without any mutual communication of thier sentiments. "It may not be improper," says Beattie, "to inform the public that neither did he know of my having undertaken this argument, nor I of his having discussed that subject, till we came mutually to exchange our papers, for the purpose of knowing one another's sentiments in regard to what we had written."

I merely hazard it as a conjecture, that though they had forgotten who had the merit of first suggesting the theory, the coincidence may be in some measure accounted for by their frequent intercourse, and even by their several contributions to the Literary Society. Many similar coincidences, which ought to be traced to the same source, will be remembered by him who is familiar with the works of Reid, Campbell, Gerard, and Beattie.

The busiest part of Dr. Beattie's life

was between the time that he became a professor, and the year in which he published his Minstrel. All the works he ever published were planned and written during this period, excepting his Evidences of the Christian Religion, and his projected treatise on the slave trade.

In the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six, he married Miss Mary Dun, daughter of Doctor James Dun, who, for nearly seventy years, was a teacher in the Grammar School, Aberdeen. It has been mistated by some, that Beattie was married during the time that he was a master in that school. He had been nearly six years a professor before he was married. And this lady still survives him. Her brother succeeded Mr. Beattie in the Grammar School.

I have every reason to presume, that the far-famed Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth was composed about this period, though not published till some time after. His duty as a professor naturally led

him to the examination of those doctrines so zealously maintained by the admirers, or I ought rather to say, authors of the sceptical philosophy. And how he has acquitted himself in that respect is well known to the public.

Descartes and Locke had laid the foundation of that immense fabric of sophistry and scepticism, which was afterwards reared by Berkeley and Hume. The two former did not perceive the consequences which flowed from some of the leading doctrines of their philosophy. The two latter, however, with intentions as different as can possibly be imagined, shewed, that from the theory of ideas the most absurd and dangerous doctrines might be proved to follow; doctrines which contradicted the experience and belief of all ages; even that body and spirit are not real existences, but merely ideas in our minds.

Some philosophers, zealous for the cause of truth, and the best interests of man-

kind, were compelled to acknowledge, that the sceptical philosophy was fairly deduced from the first principles laid down by philosophers of a very different description. Their attacks, therefore, they soon perceived, ought not so much to be directed at the superstructure, as the foundation of the building.

Dr. Reid possesses the unquestionable merit of having set the first example how the doctrine of ideas, and all its dreadful consequences, might be successfully opposed. His Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense opened a new field of discussion to speculative men. And the experience of forty years warrants the affirmation, that the publication of that work formed a new æra in the philosophy of mind. This work had been published several years before the Essay on Truth appeared. The general principles, however, contained in both are perfectly the same.

In the philosophy of Reid, Beattie, and

others, it is affirmed (what I believe few will deny) that some truths are perceived intuitively, while other truths require *proof*; and assent can only be given to the latter, by those who understand the evidence upon which they rest. That faculty by which truth is perceived, in consequence of a proof, they have called *reason*; and the name of *common sense* has been given to that faculty by which we perceive self-evident truth.

Great offence has been taken at the introduction of the words *common sense* into a system of philosophy, especially when the framers of that system made it the basis of the whole of their reasonings; or, in other words, the foundation upon which all those truths that require proof are placed. There are few philosophers who have guarded as much against the ambiguity of language in their philosophical speculations as Reid and Beattie, and both of them have defined the precise meaning which they have affixed to the

words *common sense*, as they are employed in the various disquisitions published by them.

No reasonable offence could then have been taken at the introduction of that term into any philosophical speculation, provided that the definition given of it was strictly adhered to. *Common sense*, in the limited acceptation wherein it is taken in the writings of the philosophers of whom we are speaking, is a power possessed in consequence of an ultimate law of our nature, of which no other account can be given than of any other faculty of the human mind. The cavils which have been made have arisen from a dislike to some of the doctrines which have been deduced from it, and the reasonings of such persons have generally been confined to objections of that sort.

The Essay on Truth is divided into three parts. In the first the author discusses the standard of truth. In the second he gives illustrations of the doctrine he had

laid down, and in part third he answers objections. He proposes not to give a definition of truth, but only such a description of it as may make others understand what is meant by the word.

In the first chapter he treats of the perception of truth, and explains at considerable length the distinction between reason and common sense. And in the second chapter, which he divides into nine sections, he shows that all reasoning terminates in first principles; consequently that all evidence is ultimately intuitive, and that common sense is the standard of truth to man. The first part is more strictly philosophical than the other two. In the second part he confirms his doctrine from the practice of mathematicians and natural philosophers, and gives a history of the rise and progress of modern scepticism, &c.

To trace him through the different stages of his reasoning is very far from

my design. It would lead into a digression which could not be inserted in a short memoir of Dr. Beattie's life.

This essay raised the author's fame very high. It was much read and much praised in England; and what is very extraordinary, this was at a time when the writings of Reid, from whom Beattie derived whatever it contained of any importance, were comparatively speaking little known. In South Britain his character as a philosopher was much higher than in his native country.

No one can deny that the essay possesses great merit. With all submission however to better judges, I have long thought it inferior to the greater part of his other essays and dissertations. He is often intemperate in his language, very frequently declamatory, which, though the book may have been thereby rendered more popular than it would have otherwise been, does not constitute great recommendation to a

cool and dispassionate reader. These strictures however are chiefly applicable to the second and third *parts* of the essay.

The chairs of the professorships of moral philosophy were never filled with professors of equal ability in four of the five universities of Scotland, than they were at the time when Beattie was employed in the composition of his essay; Dr. Smith in Glasgow; Dr. Reid in King's College, Aberdeen, who taught moral philosophy every third year; Mr. Beattie, in Marischal College, Aberdeen; and Dr. Adam Ferguson in Edinburgh. This last gentleman is the son of the Rev. Mr. Ferguson, Minister of Logierait, Perthshire. He was taught to read English, &c. in his native village, and afterwards, I believe, derived every advantage which attendance at the schools of the town of Perth could afford.

His career was very splendid at College, and the attention of the principal noblemen and gentlemen of the county of

Perth was very soon directed to him. One of the first appointments which he received was the chaplainship of Lord John Murray's Highland Regiment. On January the 8th, 1756, he was elected keeper of the Advocates library, in the room of the celebrated David Hume, who had resigned upon the 4th of the same month. On July the 4th, 1758, he was elected professor of natural philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. And he afterwards succeeded to the chair of moral philosophy in the same seminary.

He taught there with great reputation, and not only by his prelections, but by the uncommon eloquence of his writings, contributed essentially to the fame of that university. There are passages in his History of Civil Society which not only equal, but have been long acknowledged to excel almost all his contemporaries in eloquence. His Roman History, published upwards of twenty years ago, displayed great abilities; and the political reflections

which he makes will bear to be compared with those of Hume or of Robertson.

Mr. Beattie had the honour of seeing him, in Aberdeen, in the month of October 1766. For he then married Miss Catharine Burnet, daughter of Mr. James Burnet, Merchant there, who was nearly related to Dr. Joseph Black.

Professor Ferguson was appointed secretary to the embassy sent to America, of which Lord Carlisle held his most responsible situation. Mr. Dugald Stewart upon a few days warning taught the class, and Dr. Ferguson has never *lectured* since. He has however published a retrospect of his lectures, full of the soundest maxims of moral and political wisdom.

The example which the illustrious professors in the other universities afforded could not fail to raise a spirit of emulation in Mr. Beattie. To be esteemed as an able teacher among such associates was no small praise.

We are informed by Mr. Beattie him-

self that the greater part of the Minstrel was composed in the year 1768. It is probable that his great anxiety to qualify himself for the discharge of his professional duty had interrupted, in a considerable degree, the strong bent of his genius to cultivate the Muses. However he returned with new vigour to his favourite amusement; and the Minstrel or the Progress of Genius has enrolled his name in the list of the most distinguished poets. The first part of this beautiful poem was not published till about three years after it was composed.

Few poems have been so generally read and so justly admired. In the preface he has assigned his reasons for imitating Spencer in the measure of his verse; and there are few who will not allow that what he has there stated deserves great attention. It suited the subject of the poem, and besides it pleased his ear. The measure which pleased the ear of Spencer, of Thomson, of Shenstone, and of Beattie,

ought not to be rashly condemned. It must not be dissembled however that critics of very great eminence have been of a different opinion.

Mr. Beattie was then in the prime of life, being in his thirty-third year. A poem which has been so much read and admired by the public, stands in very little need of a critique on its merits. He has displayed very great powers of imagination. And the harmony, simplicity, and variety of the composition, will bear to be compared with the attainments of the greatest masters of English versification. There are few stanzas in the two books which do not exhibit the most conspicuous beauties—great correctness of taste—a most admirable choice of imagery combined with those other qualities which constitute excellence in poetical composition. The same opinion however has not so universally prevailed as to the unity or consistency of the fable.

The publication of Dr. Beattie's Minstrel

so very soon after his Essay on Truth, contributed most essentially to the general dissemination of the latter. In Scotland it did not produce so sudden nor so great effects as in England; but the friends whom his poetical genius gained him were of all persons in the world best able to give popularity to a work of merit, and which treated of subjects in which few of the great mass of readers consider themselves interested.

On the twelfth of December, one thousand seven hundred and seventy, he received the degree of Doctor of Laws from King's College, Aberdeen.

In the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one, Beattie, at the end of the session of the College, proposed to visit London. His fame, as a man of genius, easily procured for him letters of introduction to the most celebrated literary characters in the Metropolis. He did not however leave Aberdeen till the month of July.

Mr. Boswell had the honour of introducing him to Dr. Johnson. And his other friends exerted themselves to procure for him as favourable a reception as his great merit deserved. In Scotland this was an easy matter, because he was already known to be a man of genius and an author of very considerable reputation. Many were therefore willing to proffer their services, who, whilst they shewed their own consequence, were only making use of him to bring themselves into notice. Beattie's merit most certainly was the cause of the great attention which he received at London. He was, as the great Lord Bacon expresses it, Faber suæ fortunæ, the architect of his own fortune.

It would be of very little consequence, even though it were possible, to relate the different circumstances which accompanied his introduction to the Earl of Mansfield, Lord Lyttleton, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Dr. Hurd, Dr. Porteous, or Mrs. Montagu. The latter shewed him great civility,

not only upon this, but upon every other occasion which afterwards occurred. His obligations to many individuals, in consequence of the kindness he experienced on this visit, made a lasting impression upon his mind. He was perhaps not previously aware of the high degree of estimation in which he was held in the capital; and sanguine as his expectations might have been, they were perhaps exceeded.

Beattie's modesty and good sense in conversation must have contributed considerably to his reputation among his friends in London; even as it was what first brought him forward in every situation in life. After remaining a short time in London he returned to Aberdeen, and felt those agreeable sensations which persons only who have experienced unexpected success can estimate.

His usual academical labours occupied his attention, for he was always zealous to promote the benefit of his pupils, and in their behalf did not regret any exertion

on his own part. The extent and variety of his course could not fail to improve those students who attended his class, and the proficiency which many of his scholars have made puts this beyond a doubt.

In the year 1772, his mother died at the advanced age of fourscore years. Her affectionate son, Mr. David Beattie, had for thirty years shewn her every mark of attention and kindness, and it was in his house at Johnstone, in the neighbourhood of Laurencekirk, that she died. She had (what has not often been met with) the agreeable satisfaction of seeing her youngest son hold one of the most respectable situations in society, and arrive at a degree of eminence which, partial as she might have been to him, she had never expected. Those persons who knew her best have represented her as possessed of great self-command—as a prudent, kind woman, and as exemplifying those simple and unaffected manners,

which were then more frequently to be found in Scotland than they are at present.

Her self-command was shewn upon a very peculiar occasion, the particulars of which I have chosen to introduce in this place, not from any credulity in similar stories which I have heard related, but from the unquestionable evidence upon which the circumstances that follow are proved really to have happened.

Dr. Beattie's master, James Milne, like many an admirable scholar, died very poor. If I mistake not he left only one son who still resides in Laurencekirk, and is perhaps the only school-fellow of Beattie now alive. Milne however had a numerous family of daughters. Mrs. Beattie, as was then, and still is the custom in country villages in Scotland, was requested to witness his death. She was present when that event happened. After he was to all appearance dead, his daughters *poured forth the most bitter lamentations.*

Nothing could possibly restrain the violence of their passion. And James Milne, after being supposed dead for some minutes, actually raised himself upon his bed, and with the utmost violence uttered many words, none of which those who were present understood. They called the words Latin, but it is probable that his character as a great Latin scholar (which was acknowledged through the whole country) had induced them to form that opinion.

I profess no credulity in similarly attested stories, for many reasons. The principal cause of the reports of the resusciation of such individuals has been to constitute a vehicle for the introduction of the most absurd, contradictory, and enthusiastic notions. Nothing miraculous is pretended in the case alluded to; no doctrine, no theory, religious or philosophical, was, or is, ingrafted upon what cannot be denied to be an unquestionable fact. I only humbly recommend it to those philosophers who have made physiology their particular study,

to attempt an explanation of this singular phenomenon. It is the more worthy attention, because many similar instances are to be found in Scotland (and I suppose in all countries) of persons who, according to the vulgar language of North Britain, are said *to be cried back*. They may have been supposed dead when not really so. Or, perhaps, other causes may have co-operated, which modern philosophers have, notwithstanding all their labour and sagacity, not yet discovered.

Mrs. Beattie used every effort to compose Milne's family. And when the noise subsided, James Milne *died*. Any fact added to the history of human nature is valuable; and though it may not correspond with those systems which may be current, it may furnish data to some individual who may hereafter deserve the name of Interpreter of nature.

The life of a scholar consists (as I have more than once remarked in the course of this memoir) of little else than a history of

his writings. Dr. Beattie was busily occupied in improving himself in those branches of knowledge which men of less aspiring minds would perhaps imagine he had already sufficiently cultivated.

About the beginning of June, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-three, he again went to London. His encouragement upon his former visit was, to a man in his easy circumstances, a sufficient inducement to undertake another journey to the capital. He had another reason which, though considered by the envious and illiberal as entailing servitude, has never hitherto been applied to an improper purpose. His merit, as an author, had even called the attention of royalty; a signal proof how highly he was rated by all descriptions in the community.

His present Majesty has, beyond all precedent, extended his patronage to eminent literary characters. This patronage has originated solely from himself; and the most discontented candidates for pub-

lic favour have not had the hardihood to affirm, that the royal bounty has in any instance been conferred upon an unworthy object. This is no small testimony to the rectitude of intention, and to the discrimination of the patron.

A short time after Beattie went to London a memorial was presented to the King. Dr. Beattie had, it is likely, the most express assurance from his Majesty's servants that his memorial should not pass unnoticed. The form however of petitioning the King is never dispensed with. Beattie's petition was favourably received.

On the 30th of June, 1773, he was presented to the King at the levee by Lord Dartmouth. The levee was on that day exceedingly crouded. Dr. Beattie however had the distinguished honour of conversing with the King for five minutes; a mark of attention not conferred upon ordinary men, and which those who are in the greatest favour do not always presume to expect.

The substance of this conversation with his Majesty consisted chiefly in high commendations and compliments, strongly and elegantly expressed on his writings, particularly his Essay on Truth. Such unexpected panegyric could not fail to make a lasting impression on his mind. Any attention from one in so elevated a situation (from the chief Magistrate of a great nation) is a compliment which few have ever received.

On the 21st of August following, Dr. Beattie received a letter from Mr. Robinson, Lord North's secretary, which communicated to him the agreeable information that his Majesty had been pleased to appoint him a pension; and assuring him that when other necessary business was dispatched the warrant for payment of the pension should be made out.

This was accordingly done after a reasonable time had elapsed. He was obliged however still to remain in London, as his business was not yet completed.

Beattie was during this time informed that his Majesty had expressed a desire to admit him to a private audience. And accordingly upon the 27th of October he had an audience of their Majesties at Kew. He remained there for an hour and a quarter. He uniformly expressed his admiration of the general knowledge which both the King and Queen discovered upon every topic which happened to become the subject of conversation. A more intimate knowledge with the former and present state of literature was discovered by them, than in his opinion could have been expected from persons in their elevated station.

When Dr. Beattie was about to retire, he expressed himself thus to his Majesty: "I hope, Sir, your Majesty will pardon "me, if I take this opportunity of re-"turning you my humble and most grate-"ful acknowledgements for the honour "you have been pleased to confer upon "me." His Majesty was pleased to reply.

"I think I could not have done less for "a man who has done so much service to "the nation in general, and to the cause "of truth. I shall be always glad of an "opportunity to shew the good opinion I "have of you."

He was chiefly employed for a considerable period after he returned from London, in preparing his Essay on Truth for another edition. This he published at Edinburgh in the year 1776. Besides the two Essays formerly mentioned, *viz.* that on Poetry and Music, and that on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition, there is in the same volume an Essay on the Utility of Classical Learning.

In the year 1777, he was engaged in copying for the press the Essay on Memory and Imagination, see p. 12 of that Essay. I say copying, because the public are expressly informed that what he then published were parts of those lectures which he delivered to the students under his care.

This Essay is, in my opinion, the master-piece of Beattie's prose works. It affords one of the best specimens of what I may perhaps be permitted to call "the popular lecture." It contains a vast variety of facts collected with great care, and his reasoning upon those facts is in general unexceptionable. The same observation however may be made here which was made upon the Essay on Poetry and Music, that the two parts of the Essay do not hang together so closely as perhaps a severe critic would be disposed to require.

In page 63, of the same Essay, it is mentioned "when a rider has fallen from "his horse in a deep river, there have "been instances of that noble creature "(a dog) taking hold with his teeth, and "dragging him to land by the skirts of "the coat." This actually happened at Laurencekirk. The inn at Laurencekirk is pretty well known in the North of Scotland. It may perhaps be necessary to remark, that at the time when this event

happened there was no bridge immediately in the vicinity of the village. There was then a great quantity of water in what is throughout the greater part of the year a rivulet. In attempting to cross it on horseback a person, in a state of intoxication, fell into the water. His dog actually dragged him to the door of the inn.

I cannot reconcile myself however to his reasoning upon this as well as another extraordinary instance of the sagacity of a dog which he relates. It is surely unphilosophical to have recourse to the immediate interposition of the Deity, when the phænomena can be accounted for by natural causes. The laws whereby God's providence is regulated are as general, and as invariable as the laws of matter and motion, though to us they seem to be more complicated in their nature. How far the instinct of brutes may be capable of imitating actions that appear to belong more peculiarly to reason, it is difficult, if

not impossible to describe. It will however be granted that it not only savours of enthusiasm, but produces the most dangerous consequences to admit this easy, and very summary method of accounting for any fact that appears to us to be anomalous.

I know few essays nevertheless of the same bulk that contain one half of the good sense, or a greater fund of sound practical remarks suited to a great variety of situations, but most peculiarly adapted to the youth. That part of it which treats of imagination discovers a talent which Dr. Beattie possessed in a very eminent degree; he possessed a most correct taste, and was a very elegant critic, and his opportunities of improvement were what few men in any country have enjoyed.

Nothing very remarkable in his history occurred for some years. His fame was now firmly established, and if possible was much higher in England than in his native country. He had now arrived at a more

affluent situation than perhaps he had ever expected. In the year 1778, however, he projected a work on the slave trade, but never completed it. The substance of that treatise he has inserted in his Elements of Moral Science. And in a note he has stated what prevented him from accomplishing his original intention.

In the year 1779, he published, for the use of his class, a list of Scotticisms to the amount of two hundred. This pamphlet has been of great benefit to many. It has often been remarked however that a considerable number of those words and phrases, which he has named Scotticisms, might have been with as much propriety denominated vulgar Anglicisms. However as they are not of classical authority, it is a matter of little importance by what name they are called.

The substance of Beattie's Essay on Dreaming was printed in a periodical paper called *The Mirror*, published at Edinburgh. He must have paid consi-

derable attention to the subject. Yet I suspect that no person dreams much who sleeps sound. How it happens that in (what may be called) this intermediate state, the fancy should consider those things as realities which have no existence, will never perhaps be fully explained. It is certainly a proof of the activity of the human mind, and that after exertion it is not subjected to the same, or similar lassitude with the body, which requires rest to recruit what it has lost by fatigue.

The Theory of Language is one of his longest, and certainly the most important, and original of his detached Essays. I am not afraid of contradiction when I affirm it to be the most useful treatise on the subject in the language. The works of Harris and Monboddo, are too abstract for young students, and are rather calculated for those who have acquired some knowledge of the subject. Besides, their plan is not so comprehensive as Beattie's. Upon the whole, it is an excellent Essay.

To enter, however, upon the discussion of the theories he has advanced, would be improper at the present time.

He who peruses the remaining three dissertations, contained in the same volume; on Fable and Romance; on the Attachment of Kindred; and Illustrations of Sublimity, will find many things to amuse and to instruct him.

These dissertations were published early in the year 1783.

Next year Dr. Beattie paid a visit to Dr. Porteous, then Bishop of Chester, and now bishop of London. He "shewed his Lordship a sketch of the first and second chapter of a Treatise on the Evidence of Christianity, and gave him a general account of what he meant to introduce in the sequel." The Bishop said, "that something of this kind was much wanted, and that a comprehensive view of the principal evidences of Christianity, drawn up in such a manner as to fix the attention without fatiguing it, might be highly useful in establishing

the religious principles of our youth at their first entrance into the world.

The design of this little work, thus distinctly expressed, cannot possibly be misunderstood. It is drawn up with great ability, and though nothing new could be expected upon so trite a subject, yet to those who have paid little attention to the argument it may be useful.

It is a curious circumstance, that either in consequence of fashion, or the carelessness of the age, the common topics generally treated of in the pulpit, and in the works sent forth from the press, are, among the most numerous class of professed Christians, either such as regard the evidences in confirmation of Christianity, or the enforcing the precepts of morality contained in Scripture. To insist on these constitutes, no doubt, a most important part of the duty of every teacher of Chistianity. Why, however, ought we to rest contented with this partial declaration of truth? Does it not rather betoken a fear that the cause

would be exposed by insisting upon the other parts of the Christian system? I have little doubt that this, among other causes, has produced very gross ignorance of the doctrines of Divine Revelation. It will not be denied that the objections of infidels principally respect the doctrines, and not the morality, of the Gospel. And it is needless to add, that the more they are examined, in the more purity will they be exhibited, and the stronger conviction produced.

We are informed by Dr. Beattie, in the preface to his Dissertation, that he had been requested to publish the whole system of his Lectures; but, for reasons which he there assigns, he determined not to do so. It is probable, however, that he had for a considerable time proposed to publish a summary of his Lectures, though he did not do it till the year 1790. It had long been his practice to make the students write *notes* of each discourse, with a view to assist the memory. At what particular

time, however, he was engaged in drawing up this elementary work, I have not been able to discover. It is a curious fact, that he once designed to publish it in Latin, and part of it he left behind him in that language. He wrote Latin with great facility and elegance. By the publication of a work of that kind, in Latin, his fame, as an accurate classical scholar, would have been greatly encreased; yet I have no doubt that its usefulness must have been thereby much impaired. The merit of the *Elements of Moral Science* has been too generally acknowledged to require any panegyrick in this place. The first volume contains a very accurate enumeration and arrangement of the perceptive faculties and active powers of man. He has also given a cursory view of what is called natural theology. The second volume published in the year 1793, comprehends a great deal of miscellaneous information on ethics, economics, politics, and logic, including rhetoric.

In the year 1790, Dr. Beattie edited, at Edinburgh, Addison's Papers, in 4 vols, and wrote the preface.

About this time he sustained a great loss by the death of his eldest son James Hay Beattie. The Doctor wrote a very interesting account of this excellent young man. No one who has any taste for good writing, for simplicity of language, and narrative composed of a selection of the most interesting incidents will, I am persuaded, be satisfied with persuing it only once.

His son's progress in every branch of education was rapid and uncommon, almost beyond example. To the greatest quickness of parts he added what is often not to be met with, the most indefatigable application. He was, on the fourth of June, 1787, appointed assistant professor of moral philosophy and logic, in Marischal College. His age was then not quite nineteen. He survived, however, his no-

mination to the professorship little more than three years.

This extraordinary young man possessed, like his father, poetical genius. Dr. Beattie, however, seems to have been designed by nature to be a poet of a superior order to his son. I have formed this opinion after comparing the poetical productions of both, when about the same time of life. The Doctor's verses discover superior poetical invention; a greater command of poetical language; and, with respect to harmony and variety of versification, there is no comparison.

Mr. James Hay Beattie, however, wrote Latin verses with the greatest facility. This talent, as I formerly mentioned, his father never possessed; and, perhaps, unless frequent attempts have been made at school, or at least in early life, it is not to be acquired. The favourite Latin classic of both was Virgil; and, I think, this accounts for the very frequent elisions in the Latin verses of

Mr. Hay Beattie. Had he made Ovid his model in this respect, I am persuaded he would have avoided those elisions much more than he has done. His translations nevertheless possess the most distinguished merit, and are entitled to a very high degree of praise.

Dr. Beattie never completely recovered the shock he received by his son's death. He was a tender and indulgent father; and the amiable dispositions the filial obedience, and uncommon endowments of J. H. Beattie, gave full scope to the exercise of those paternal affections. He was cut off too at a time of life when the hopes of the father, and indeed of all who knew him, were raised very high. Though young, he had given the most undeniable proofs of great abilities, and promised to be an ornament to that University whereof he was a member, and to be a source of comfort to his parent in his declining years.

In the year 1791, Dr. Beattie printed, but did not publish, a small volume of his

son's works, wherein are contained several pieces which he has not thought proper to reprint.

He went to London in the summer of the same year, accompanied by his son Montagu Beattie. This young man, who was about ten years younger than his brother, died in the month of March, 1796. He was called Montagu after Mrs. Montagu, who had patronised Dr. Beattie at a very early period, and whose Essay on Shakspeare the Doctor has taken so many opportunities of commending.

During their residence in Edinburgh, both in going and returning from London, I saw Montagu every day, and I had many opportunities of observing him in very different situations. Of a boy, as he then was, it may be supposed no just opinion can be formed; and, indeed, this is in a great measure true. Even at that early age, however, it required little sagacity to discover that he possessed great quickness of apprehension, and his remarks ex-

hibited a shrewdness much above his years. Almost all his time had been spent in the company of his father and that of his grandfather, Dr. Dun. From this a boy of his quickness could not fail to derive great advantages. His knowledge of the Latin language was, as might be expected, very trifling, because he had not then left the Grammar School. I rather think he had never attended school very regularly. His grandfather superintended his education in a great measure, and I was informed by Dr. Beattie himself, that Montagu had a short time before read with him the second and third books of the Æneid.

As a specimen, however, that Montagu was not even then inattentive to his father's instructions, I shall mention a criticism of Dr. Beattie's upon a line in Virgil, which Montagu repeated to me. It ought to be observed, that the passage was selected by me to be explained, and not by him.

—— et omnis *humo* fumat Neptunia Troja.
III. l. 3.

Now, said he, the word *humo* is in this passage generally explained *on the ground*, but it ought to be translated *from the ground*, if we wish to express clearly Virgil's meaning. N. B. The Delph. edit. in the interpret. explains it by *a fundamentis*.

He possessed great vivacity, or a great flow of natural spirits, and formed a striking contrast in this respect to his brother's manner at the same age. I am credibly informed that some years before his death he applied with great eagerness to his studies, and made uncommon proficiency. Nay, I have been assured by those who were intimately acquainted with both, that of the two brothers, Montagu was in many respects the superior. He died of a disease similar to that which cut off his brother.

These, and other misfortunes, to use the language of the poet, "harrowed up

the soul" of Dr. Beattie, and his health, never at any time good, was thereby very considerably impaired. He was no longer under the necessity of doing the duty of the class, because he had the influence to get Mr. George Glenny appointed his assistant and successor.

Of late years he entirely sequestered himself from society, and even the kind attentions and civilities of his friends and admirers were not relished by him. He dropped all correspondence with his old English friends, and their numerous inquiries after the state of his health did not now excite those quick sensibilities of which he had formerly been so susceptible. Premature old age, with all its infirmities, had made rapid advances upon him, and for three years before his death, he kept the house, and was for a great part of that time confined to his bed. If I mistake not, the last time he ventured out to take a short walk, was in the month of June, 1800. He was then very corpulent, and dis-

covered extreme debility. At this time he was only about sixty-five years of age.

His person was about the middle size, of a broad, square make, which seemed to indicate a more robust constitution than he really had. I have formerly mentioned that he was, during the whole course of his life, subject to attacks of head-ach, which upon many occasions interrupted his studies. His features were exceedingly regular; his complexion was somewhat dark; his eyes had more expression than those of any other person I remember to have seen.

In the earlier part of his life he shewed great convivial talents, and was much admired in company, for his wit and uncommon flow of humour. He indulged himself, however, in liberties of that kind very seldom for many years past. He was a most admirable punster. Many of his puns are often quoted in conversation in the north; which, as far as that kind of wit deserves praise, discover great facility of

invention. Any time that I ever saw him in company he was remarkably silent, but I could discover that he was not only attentive to the conversation, but seemed to be studying the features of those persons with whom he was in company.

In another situation, and with other associates, it is likely that he would have exerted himself more, and would perhaps have taken a much greater share in the conversation. He was an excellent physiognomist, and from his great intercourse with the world, his long experience and his knowledge of human nature, he formed a very correct opinion of the characters of those with whom he happened to converse.

What enhances Dr. Beattie's merit in the estimation of all good judges is, that the circumstances wherein he was originally placed were so unfavourable towards procuring advancement. If he had possessed the advantages of birth or of fortune,

his success would not have been considered as so extraordinary.

In every situation in life he acquitted himself with credit, and had the address to recommend himself to such persons as were likely to do him a service. His manners were very conciliating, and he had a vein of good sense that rarely deserted him, and without which men of great abilities can never expect to interest in their behalf those who have it in their power to administer to their promotion. Learning alone cannot do this.

What a contrast is to be discerned between the manner wherein Beattie and Burns were affected by the attention and flattery of the public. The former was in all situations respectable, and improved every opportunity to the best advantage; while the latter became giddy as it were with the applause which he received, and seemed to forget that without prudence, and a proper reserved discretion, the most

splendid talents cannot long ensure that respect without which no man can successfully recommend himself to a patron, or gain his good opinion, so far as to induce him to exert himself in favour of his client.

Though the early history of these two poets may bear some resemblance, yet there are a great many important circumstances wherein it differed.* Their poetical genius was also different. Beattie possessed the benefit of a regular and liberal education. Burns had no opportunity of profiting by such advantages; and the want of this cannot possibly be repaired. The one had studied and formed his taste upon the models of antiquity. With these the latter had no acquaintance. They both excelled in descriptive poetry. The images and allusions of the one, however, are most commonly derived from the works of nature; while the other, with a bold and

* See No. II. Appendix.

discriminating pencil, delineates character and manners. The genius of both was perfectly capable of reaching the sublime and the pathetic; and both have done so in an eminent degree. Beattie, however, is more uniformly sublime than Burns is, even in his best pieces. The taste of the former was chaste and highly cultivated; the latter had the stamina (if I may so express myself) of good taste, but it had received little culture. Burns had a more vigorous mind. Beattie more acquired knowledge. The professor's habits of study were regular, those of the Ayrshire poet were not so; his exertions were sudden, and generally not long continued. And, finally, Beattie had studied the art of versification with great assiduity, whilst Burns had paid little attention to the subject. The verses of the former are, therefore, more remarkable for smoothness, harmony, and variety, than those of the latter.

The greater part of Dr. Beattie's life was spent in the discharge of his duty as a

professor. Without viewing him in this character an imperfect conception of him must be conveyed to the mind. He began his career when the attention of literary men, particularly in Scotland, began to be strongly directed to moral science. And he had competitors in the line of his profession, who must have contributed much to excite in him a generous emulation.

At the commencement of his labours he took great pains to prepare himself upon those particular subjects which it was his duty to explain to the students. Without this, no man can ever become a respectable professor. With application and moderate abilities it is impossible that one, whose duty it is to teach any science, can fail to improve himself. What he may not have investigated with sufficient attention in one session he has an opportunity of re-considering the next. If he has been too prolix in some parts of his course, these he can abridge. If his il-

lustrations of some abstruse doctrines have not been sufficiently ample, he has it in his power to increase them, that the abstract parts of the system may be comprehended with greater ease by those who have been but little accustomed to such investigations.

Professor Beattie in his lectures avoided (as much as was consistent with affording a just idea of the topics he was called upon to discuss) entering upon disquisitions of an abstract or metaphysical nature. Indeed his turn of mind and habits of study did not lead him that way. It would be a very idle business for a professor to spend his time in attempting to investigate indeterminable questions, which can be of no benefit to any one. But there is a very great difference nevertheless between passing over those questions entirely, and giving a compendious view of them. That Beattie gave an excellent summary of the speculative doctrines of moral philosophy cannot be denied. It is evident however

that he did not enter, with the ardour of his great master Dr. Reid, into those discussions which relate to the intellectual, and active powers of man.

His powers of abstraction were by no means to be compared with those of Reid. He was however admirably qualified to illustrate, in a popular, and yet not in an unphilosophical manner, the doctrines of Reid's philosophy; and the chief merit of the more abstract parts of his philosophical writings consists in this.

Beattie's lectures were always distinguished by the introduction of a variety of practical observations. While they were familiar, they did not degenerate into that coarse kind of illustration which both betrays a bad taste, and degrades any subject however interesting or important. Difficult questions relative to morals, such as inquiries relative to the nature and foundation of virtue, &c. he did not prosecute to any great length in his lectures. In place of this he interspersed observations

which were much calculated to direct the general behaviour of those who heard him.

In this respect he seems to have imitated some of the ancients, and in particular to have had Cicero's offices in his view. Young men, in the situation of the generality of Dr. Beattie's students, stand in great need of such an instructor, and he who was attentive to the maxims laid down by the professor must have acquired much greater knowledge of the world than by his own experience he could for a long time have obtained.

His lectures however were more miscellaneous than those of most professors of moral philosophy in Scotland. They contained an admirable view of polite literature, as extensive as the greater number of the courses of rhetoric. Here Beattie excelled. He seems to have been conscious of this himself, and therefore a considerable portion of the *session* was always spent on that part of his subject.

He took the greatest care to teach his students the general principles of criticism. He pointed out to them in strong terms the necessity of cultivating a good taste; and in the composition of his own lectures, in the works which he published, and in his criticisms on works of merit, he shewed them the path that they ought to pursue.

He possessed a most unfeigned reverence for the ancients, and was not a blind admirer but a successful imitator. Much of his time had been spent in the acquisition of classical learning. And being acknowledged to be a good critic he was better entitled than many to interpose his judgment.

Poetry, painting, and the other fine arts, were frequently alluded to by him. The first indeed he discussed at great length, and the substance of these prelections he published in his Essay on Poetry and Music. Even his preface to the first edition of his poems discovers

an acuteness, and a discrimination which could hardly be looked for in a young man in his unfavourable circumstances.

Though professor of logic, as well as moral philosophy, he paid very little attention to what has been called the school logic. If he disliked abstract metaphysical discussions on morals, he must have turned with abhorrence from the verbal quibbles and artificial distinctions without differences, of which that art not only chiefly but solely consists.

In short, the general tendency of his prelections was to communicate a taste for elegant learning—to urge those who attended him to the practice of good morals, and not to rest contented with qualifications which are more showy than solid.

Placed on so very public a station, he could not fail to be of essential service to those who were afterwards to fill the most responsible situations in that part of the country where he resided. Many of his

pupils have acknowledged the obligations which they owed to him; and upon subjects of criticism or polite learning in general, his opinions have long been considered as oracular and decisive; not from the peremptory and imperious tone wherein they were delivered, but from the influence which superior talents always acquire.

I have in the former part of this memoir enumerated all Beattie's works, and made a very few strictures upon each. His prose works principally consisted, as we have seen, of parts of his lectures which he published; or treated of subjects which necessarily came under review in his class. Excepting his evidences of the Christian Religion they are all strictly professional. It must occur to every one who looks at the dates which Beattie has generally prefixed to his essays, and who reads the prefaces to his Dissertations and Moral Science, that he did little after he got his Majesty's pension compared with what he had done before.

Dr. Beattie's style deserves very particular notice. It is evident even though he had not mentioned it, that the pattern he had proposed to himself was the style of Addison. Like his great master he studiously avoided the introduction of learned words, or such as are of foreign derivation. His sentences are uniformly simple in their structure. In this respect he has, in my opinion, excelled Mr. Addison.

His prose works however must (with two exceptions) be considered as part of those lectures which he delivered to the students under his care. He therefore studied the greatest plainness of expression, and selected his illustrations from those familiar topics which were best accommodated to the capacity of his hearers.

Few authors who have written so much have been (if I may use that expression) so equal to themselves as Beattie. He had studied the English language with the most unremitted attention, and he has

avoided more successfully than most of his countrymen those barbarisms which so frequently have found a place in the works of eminent Scottish authors.

He sometimes, it must be confessed, seems to be diffuse. He often introduces pretty long episodes into his works, which he doubtless would never have done had they been originally composed for any other purpose than to be delivered to a class of young students.

It is very rare to find one possessed of poetical genius so uniformly simple in his style of composition in prose. And this circumstance, in my opinion, is more characteristic of Beattie's genius than any other that could be mentioned of him as an author.

His poetry is most exquisitely beautiful. And the same remark may be repeated in regard to it which we have made on his prose writings, that he is always equal to himself, and never sinks below what one would expect from the author of the

Minstrel. His poetical talents far exceeded his powers for scientific or philosophical disquisition. And it is much to be regretted that so small a part of his time had been of late years spent in the cultivation of the Muses.

Dr. Beattie was by no means careless of his poetical fame. Yet if we might judge from the extent of his prose works it can scarcely be doubted that he both cultivated his talents for philosophical discussion with greater ardour, and seemed to value himself more upon his character as a philosopher than as a poet. This was most particularly the case for the last thirty-five years of his life.

After he had endured much bodily pain, and in a great measure had become insensible even to what he himself was suffering, Dr. Beattie died, at Aberdeen, upon the 18th day of August, 1803.

It will be admitted, that if he was not at the time of his death the first literary character in the United Kingdom, he was second or third in the list.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE following character of Principal Blackwell was, if I mistake not, written by Dr. Gerard.

On Sunday, the 6th of March, 1757, died, at Edinburgh, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, Dr. Thomas Blackwell, Principal and Professor of Greek in the Marischal College, of Aberdeen. He became very early conspicuous in life for his masterly knowledge in all the several branches of polite literature; and, by his inquiry into the life and writings of Homer, acquired at once that distinguished character in the learned world, which he ever after supported with so much credit and reputation. As in learning and knowledge he was exquisite and equal to any, so in the address of a teacher he was perhaps supe-

rior to all. No man ever possessed in a more eminent degree the talent of inspiring young minds with a love of learning; of begetting among them a generous emulation; and of forming them to a taste and perception of what was elegant and beautiful in the admired productions of antiquity. On public occasions, when he appeared as head of the University, he acquitted himself with so much dignity, and delivered his orations with such just elocution, and in a manner so emphatic and graceful, as gained him not only the applause, but the universal admiration of his audience. His latter days were calm and resigned. He beheld the approach of death with fortitude, composure, and serenity; like one who having acted his part well, when he arrived at the brink of life, could look back with pleasure and forward without apprehension. As on many other accounts, so particularly, his loss is to be regretted in that he was snatched away before he had put the finishing hand to a

work, which, from what of it has already appeared, will hand him down to posterity as a sincere lover of his country, and a friend to mankind.

No. II.

THE following three stanzas are part of a poem in the broad Scotch dialect, which Mr. Beattie addressed to Mr. Alexander Ross, at Lochlee, author of "The Fortunate Shepherdess."

O bonny are our greensward hows,
Where through the birks the burney rows,
And the bee bums, and the ox lows,
And saft winds rustle,
And shepherd lads, on sunny knows,
Blaw the blythe whistle.

It's true we Norlands manna fa'
To eat sae nice, or gang sae braw',
As they that come fra far awa';
Yet sma's our skaith;
We've peace (and that's well worth it a')
And meat and claith.

Our fine new-fangled sparks, I grant ye,
Gie poor auld Scotland mony a taunty:
They're grown sae ugertfu' and vaunty
And capernoited,
They guide her like a canker'd aunty,
That's deaf and doited.

FINIS.

C. and R. Baldwin, Printers,
New Bridge-street, London.

BOOKS lately published by C. *and* R. BALDWIN.

1. AN ACCOUNT OF THE ISLAND OF CEYLON. Containing its History, Geography; a Description of its Various Inhabitants, and Natural Productions—to which is subjoined a Journal of an Embassy to the Court of Candy. By ROBERT PERCIVAL, Esq. of his Majesty's 18th or Royal Irish Regiment. Illustrated by Maps and Charts, 4to. Boards. 1*l.* 8*s.*

2. AN ACCOUNT OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE. Containing an Historical View of its original Settlement by the Dutch, its Capture by the British in 1794, and the different Policy pursued there by the Dutch and British Governments. Also a Sketch of its Geography, Productions, the Manners and Customs of its Inhabitants, &c. &c. with a View of the Commercial and Political advantages which might be derived from its possession by Great-Britain, by the same Author, 4to. 1*l.*

3. PARIS AS IT WAS AND AS IT IS; or, a SKETCH of the FRENCH CAPITAL, illustrative of the Effects of the Revolution, with respect to SCIENCES, LITERATURE, ARTS, RELIGION, EDUCATION, MANNERS, and AMUSEMENTS; comprising also a correct Account of the most remarkable National Establishments and Public Buildings. In a Series of Letters, written by an English Traveller, during the Years 1801-2, to a Friend in London, 2 vols. 8vo. Boards. 1 *l.* 1*s.*

4. THE PRAISE OF PARIS—or, a Sketch of the French Capital, in Extracts of Letters from France, in the Summer of 1802. By S. W. F. R. S. L. A. S. 5*s.* 6*d.*

5. The Poetical Works of CHARLES CHURCHILL; with explanatory Notes, an authentic Account of his Life now first published, and a copious Index, and embellished with an excellent engraved Head of the Author, 2 vols. 8vo. 18*s.*

6. PETRARCA; A Collection of Sonnets from various Authors, with an introductory Dissertation

on the Origin and Structure of the Sonnet. By GEORGE HENDERSON, Esq. Elegantly printed in foolscap 8vo. adorned with beautiful appropriate Engravings by Tomkins 7*s.* 6*d.*

7. An ENQUIRY into the NECESSITY, NATURE, and EVIDENCES of REVEALED RELIGION. By the Rev. THOS. ROBINSON, A.M. Rector of Ruan-Minor, Cornwall, 8vo. Boards. 6*s.*

8. A TOUR THROUGH NORTH WALES, interspersed with Observations on its Scenery, Agriculture, Botany, Manufactures, Customs, History, and Antiquities. By the Rev. J. Evans, B. A. 8vo. 3d Edition. Boards. 8*s.*

9. LETTERS written during a TOUR THROUGH SOUTH WALES, descriptive of the Scenery, Antiquities, Agriculture, Botany, &c. of that Part of the Principality. By the same Author, 8vo. 8*s.*

10. THE GENERAL HISTORY OF INLAND NAVIGATION. Containing a complete Account of all the Canals of the United Kingdom, with their Variations and Extensions, according to the amendments of Acts of Parliament to June 1803. And a Brief History of the Canals of Foreign Countries. By JOHN PHILLIPS, Sen. 4th Edition 8vo. 616 pp. 10*s.* 6*d.*

11. WALKS AND SKETCHES AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE. To which is subjoined a Journey from Cape Town to Blettenburgh's Bay. By GEORGE SEMPLE, crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

ALSO

AN ABRIDGEMENT of the PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, edited by Dr. Hutton, Dr. George Shaw, and Dr. Richard Pearson. This Work is published Monthly in Parts, of which from No. I to XI. have already appeared. Demy 4to. 10*s.* 6*d.* Royal do. 18*s.*

Four of these parts complete a large Volume of about 700 pages, and from 16 to 22 copper-plates.

3 2044 029 881 497